



TRIAL BY MEDIA

THE QUEEN CAROLINE AFFAIR, PART 1 – LAW, LAWYERS, AND THE QUEEN CAROLINE TRIAL

Cynthia Roman & Mike Widener

In this issue of the *Green Bag* and in the next three, we are printing an ink-on-paper catalog of a thought-provoking and beautiful exhibition about “The Queen Caroline Affair” of 1820-21 that appeared in material form last year at Yale Law School’s Lillian Goldman Law Library (and is still available online). What we have here in the first installment are an introduction by co-curators Cynthia Roman and Mike Widener, followed by images from the “Law, Lawyers and the Queen Caroline Trial” part of the exhibition (in, alas, black-and-white, though they can still be seen in their natural colors online) and slightly revised essays by Ryan Martins, Mark Schoenfield, and Simon Stern.

– *The Editors*

TWO HUNDRED YEARS AGO the newly crowned King George IV charged his long-estranged wife with adultery, in an attempt to be rid of her for good. The resulting trial of Queen Caroline became the center of a media frenzy the likes of which Britain had never seen. London booksellers sold an enormous variety of pamphlets, broadsides, and books. This outpouring of printed material made

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George IV the first British monarch who was recognizable to the general public. It also fueled a division of the nation along class lines, and fed a public hungry for gossip about the lifestyles of the rich and famous, foreshadowing today's tabloid press.

As Prince of Wales, George IV had been forced into an arranged and loveless marriage with his German cousin, Princess Caroline of Brunswick. They separated soon after the birth of their daughter. He ascended to the British throne in 1820 following a decade as regent for his ailing father, George III. George IV's enormous gambling debts and extravagant lifestyle made him deeply unpopular. His attempt to divorce Queen Caroline through a bill in Parliament gave his political opponents their opportunity to strike back. Accordingly, the reform movement adopted Caroline as their figurehead.

Drawing on the strengths of Yale's Lewis Walpole Library in graphic satire and Lillian Goldman Law Library in trial accounts, the "Trial by Media" exhibition examines the role of print media in documenting the Queen Caroline affair and shaping public perceptions. Today these sources serve as a lens for studying gender roles, class divisions, publishing, political satire, and British politics.

Trial by Media

The exhibition was on display in the Lillian Goldman Law Library from September 9 through December 19, 2019. A digital version is now available online.¹

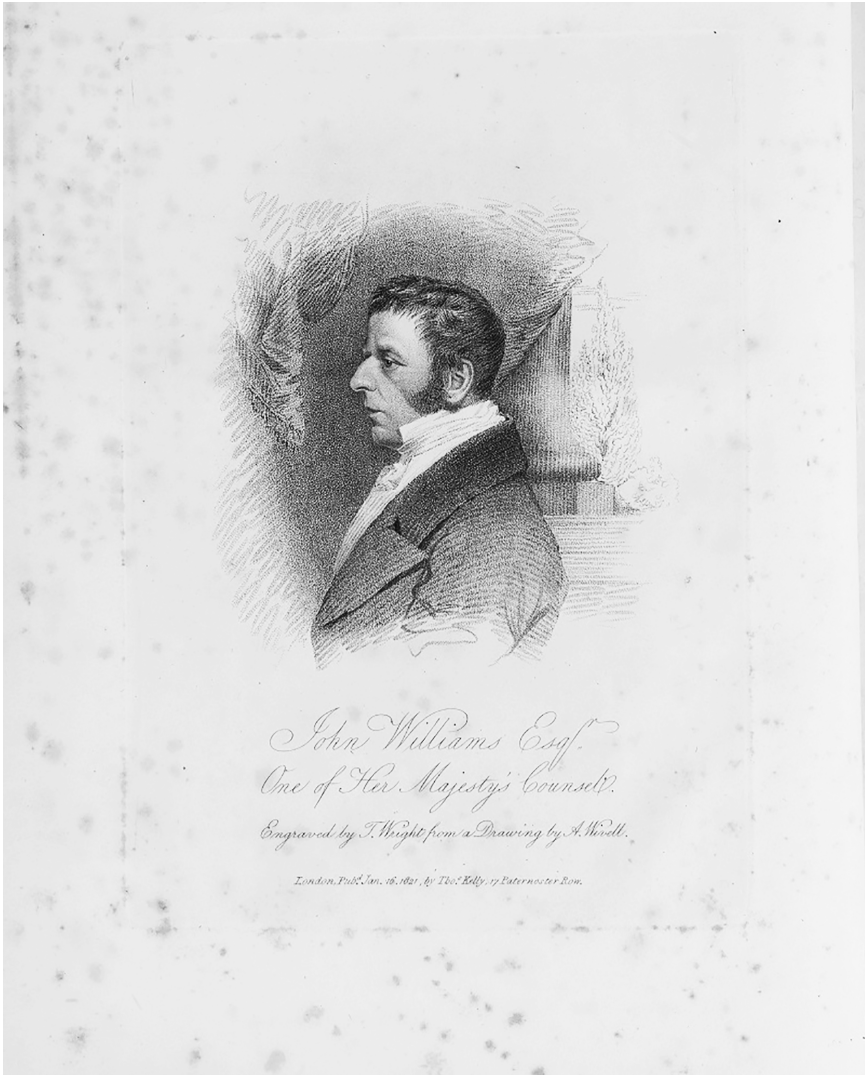
The Lewis Walpole Library's Humphrey Shop Album is also available online.² Created by George Humphrey (1773?-1831?), a prominent London publisher, the album is a rare surviving example of a folio that a print seller would present to visitors to his shop for browsing prints available for purchase. The large folio includes 131 early nineteenth-century graphic satires by Theodore Lane, George Cruikshank, Robert Cruikshank, William Heath, J.L. Marks, and Charles Williams. The album also includes prints published by competitors, S.W. Fores, William Benbow, J.L. Marks, and John Fairburn. The album is rich in stories – not just the stories of the historical events of a scandalous royal divorce, but also stories about the role of visual media in early nineteenth-century London as historical witness and as arbiter of public opinion. Published from June 1820, when the Queen returned to London from residency in Europe during an estrangement from George IV, through May 1821, the prints feature the major figures involved in the scandal: in addition to Queen Caroline, King George, and the Queen's alleged lover Bergami, Sir Matthew Wood who advised the Queen and Castlereagh, Sidmouth, Liverpool, Brougham, Wellington, and Denman, among others also appear.

We are grateful to the distinguished authors of the essays, and to the *Green Bag* for bringing the essays to a broader audience.

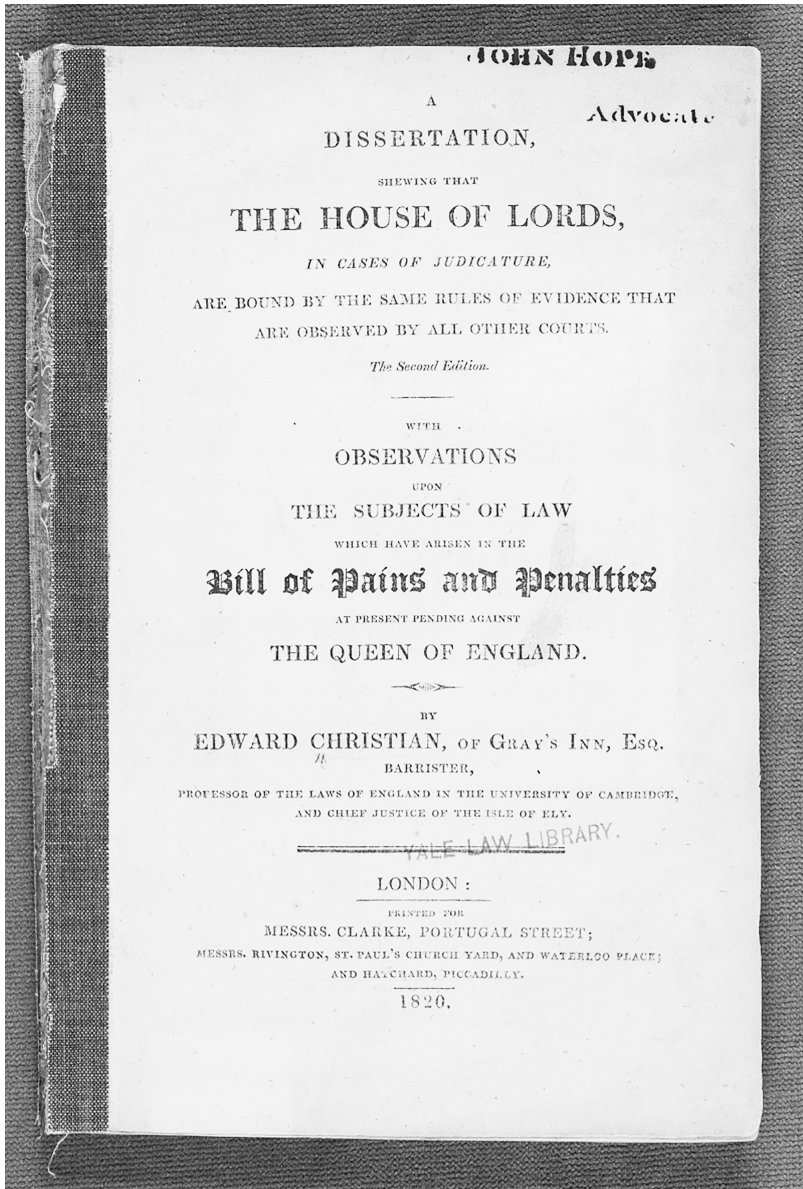


¹ <https://exhibits-new.library.yale.edu/s/trialbymedia>.

² <http://findit.library.yale.edu/bookreader/BookReaderDemo/index.html?oid=16817608&page=1#page/1/mode/1up>.



Title: Trial of Queen Caroline. Creator: Queen Caroline. Contributor: Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School. Identifier: Rare36 08-0034 <http://search.library.yale.edu/catalog/b452359>.



Title: A dissertation shewing that the House of Lords in cases of judicature are bound by the same rules of evidence that are observed by all other courts. Creator: Edward Christian. Contributor: Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School. Identifier: Rare26 08-0226 pam21 <http://search.library.yale.edu/catalog/b261022>.

THE
QUEEN'S LETTER
TO
THE KING.



FOURTH EDITION.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR WILLIAM HONE,
LUDGATE-HILL.

1820.

Sixpence.

Title: *The Queen's letter to the King*. Creator: *Queen Caroline*. Contributor: *Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School*. Identifier: *Rare26 08-0226 pam14* <http://search.library.yale.edu/catalog/b1261553>.



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B I L L

To deprive Her MAJESTY Caroline Amelia Elizabeth of the Title, Prerogatives, Rights, Privileges, and Pretensions of Queen Consort of this Realm, and to dissolve the Marriage between His MAJESTY and the said Queen.

Note.—The first column contains a Copy of the Bill—The second column contains the CLAUSES THAT DROPT OUT, and which are now proposed to be restored.

WE HEREBY in the year one thousand eight hundred and fourteen, Her MAJESTY, Caroline Amelia Elizabeth, then Princess of Wales, and now Queen Consort of this Realm, being at Milan, in Italy, engaged in her service in a menial situation, one Bartolomeo Pergami, otherwise Bartolomeo Pergami, a foreigner of low station, who had before served in a similar capacity :

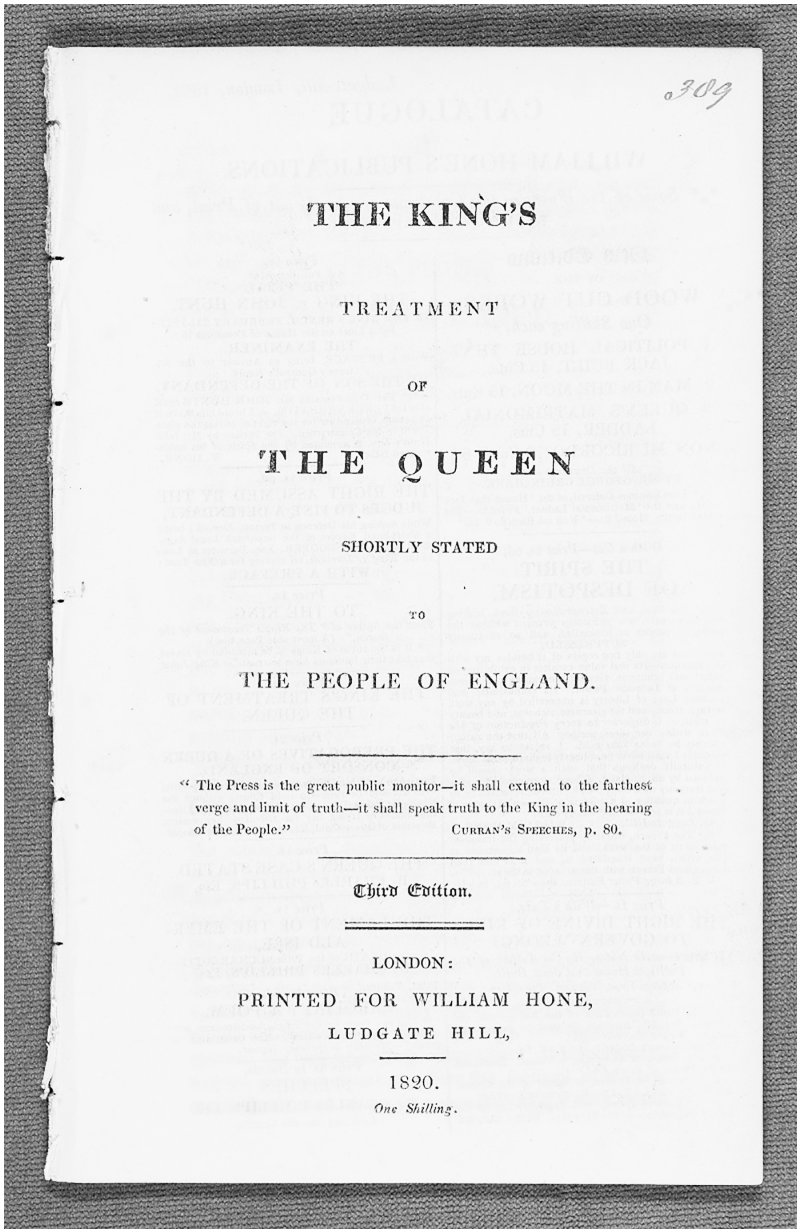
AND WHEREAS, after the said Bartolomeo Pergami, otherwise Bartolomeo Pergami, had so entered the service of her Royal Highness the said Princess of Wales, a most unbecoming and degrading intimacy commenced between Her Royal Highness and the said Bartolomeo Pergami, otherwise Bartolomeo Pergami:

AND WHEREAS her Royal Highness not only advanced the said Bartolomeo Pergami, otherwise Bartolomeo Pergami, to a high situation in her Royal Highness's household, and received into her service many of his near relations, some of them

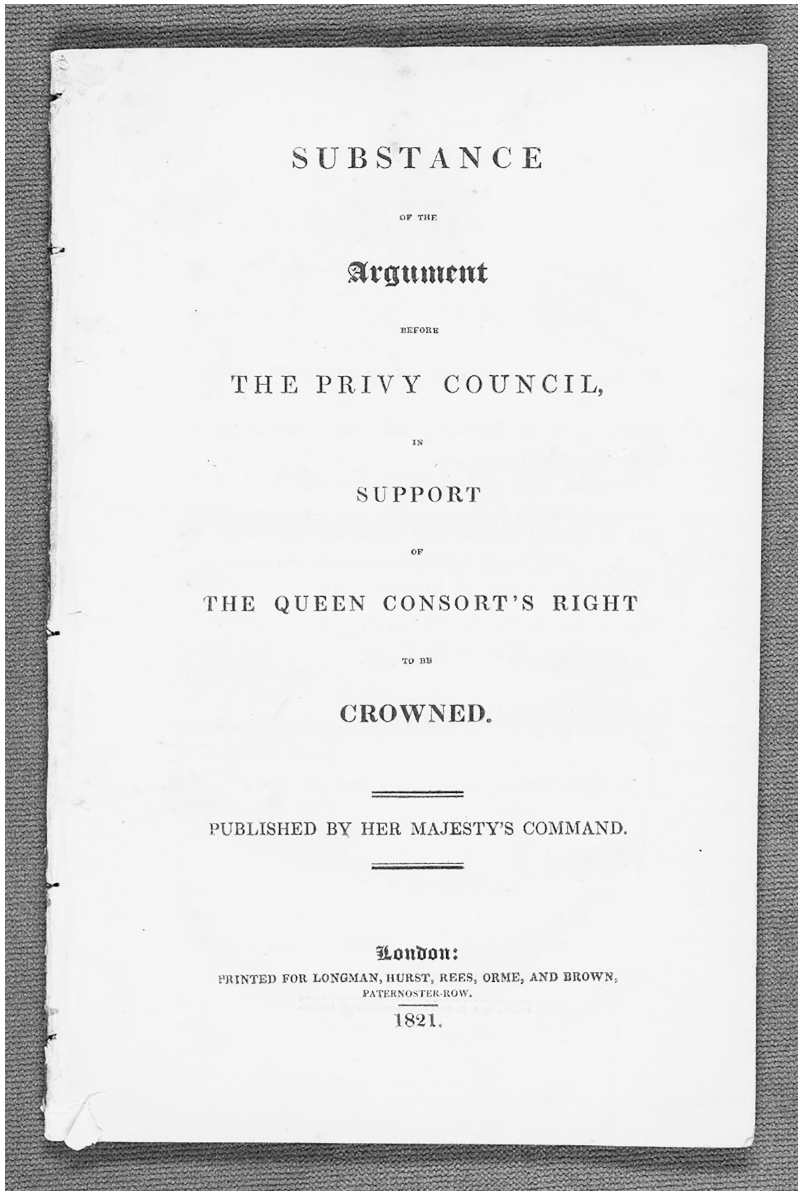
WE HEREBY on the eighth day of April, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-five, your MAJESTY, then being Prince of Wales and Heir apparent to the throne of these Realms, intermarried with the Princess Caroline Amelia Elizabeth of Brunswick, by whom, on the seventh day of January, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-six, you had issue the late Princess Charlotte of happy memory.

AND WHEREAS on the thirtieth day of April, in the said year one thousand seven hundred and ninety-six, your Majesty was graciously pleased to write to Her said Majesty, in and by a letter of that date, as follows:—"Our inclinations are not in our power, nor should either of us be held answerable to the other; because nature has not made us suitable to each other;" and in which said letter your Majesty defined to Her Majesty, the terms wherein you proposed from thenceforth to live wholly and entirely

Title: Dropt clauses out of the bill against the queen : For Mr. Attorney general to peruse and settle. With a refresher. Creator: William Hone. Contributor: Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School. Identifier: Rare36 08-0033 <http://search.library.yale.edu/catalog/b1235098>.



Title: *The King's treatment of the Queen : shortly stated to the people of England.*
Contributor: Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School. Identifier: Rare26 08-0226 pam12 <http://search.library.yale.edu/catalog/b1261520>.



Title: Substance of the argument before the Privy Council, in support of the Queen Consort's right to be crowned. Creator: Baron Henry Peter Brougham. Contributor: Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School. Identifier: Rare26 08-0226 pam25 <http://search.library.yale.edu/catalog/b1283380>.



Representation of the House of Lords during the Trial of her Majesty Queen Caroline.

Title: The life, trial & defence, of Her Most Gracious Majesty, Caroline, Queen of Great-Britain. Creator: Queen Caroline. Contributor: Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School. Identifier: Rare26 08-0223 <http://search.library.yale.edu/catalog/b656586>.

Trial by Media



Title: The trial at large of Her Majesty Caroline Amelia Elizabeth, Queen of Great Britain. Creator: Queen Caroline. Contributor: Lillian Goldman Law Library, Yale Law School. Identifier: Rare26 08-0222 <http://search.library.yale.edu/catalog/b481352>.