

The Publications of Thomas Violet

Gary Oddie

1. Introduction

Thomas Violet was a goldsmith and writer on trade. His goldsmiths mark (Heart shape containing T V and a star below) was first entered in 1627⁽¹⁾. His last mention at Goldsmiths Hall is in 1660⁽²⁾. As he would have served an apprenticeship, he is possibly the Thomas Violet, son of Peter, who was baptised in London on 5 December 1609.



In 1634 he was fined by the Goldsmiths' Company for not attending the Warden's dinner⁽³⁾. Later in the same year he was imprisoned for twenty weeks for exporting over weight English gold and silver coins in exchange for French gold. He was pardoned after paying a fine of £2,000 and agreeing to inform on other exporters of coin⁽⁴⁾. By 1635 Violet's evidence and investigations had resulted in several merchants being called before the Star Chamber. They were found guilty and heavily fined for exporting coin.

In the late 1630's he paid £1,500 for the post of surveyor to the gold and silver wire-drawers. Again many merchants were fined for selling adulterated or plated wire. Between 1635 and 1640 Violet was involved in the attempts to set up the Wire-drawers' Company whose members would regulate and mark their products. This was in direct competition with and received opposition from the Goldsmiths' Company.

Violet was a Royalist and was involved in a scheme to covert London to the Royalist cause. In 1643 he was given a parliamentary pass by Lord General Essex to collect a letter from the King in Oxford for delivery to John Wollaston, then the Lord Mayor of London. Wollaston was a Goldsmith whom Violet had crossed some years before, and on delivering the letter, Violet was immediately arrested (6 January 1643/4) for high treason and imprisoned in the Tower for four years. His estates in Essex and Shropshire were seized along with bonds and documents including the King's acknowledgement of his expenses during the Star Chamber prosecutions (£19,068). He petitioned for his release in 1647 and spent many years trying to reclaim his losses.

In 1651 Violet petitioned the Mint Committee to make farthing tokens⁽⁵⁾.

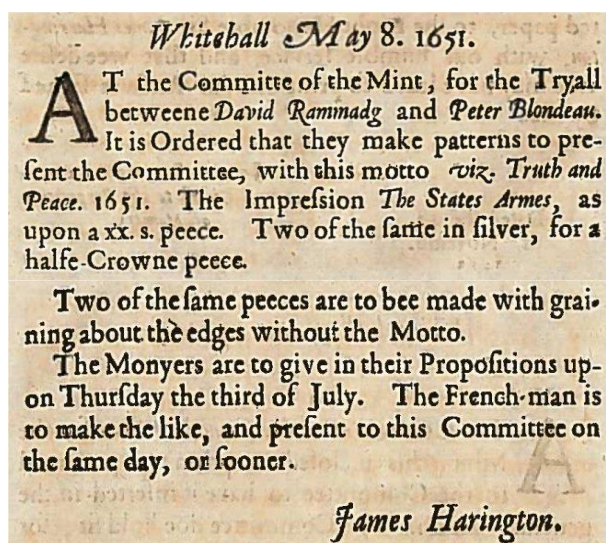
By 1652, large quantities of silver were still being exported to the continent and Violet became involved with the investigations of various ships. Sir John Wollaston was in charge of silver melting at the mint and was accused of embezzlement⁽⁶⁾. Violet thus replaced Wollaston at the Mint and continued to publish on trade matters and the export of silver, widely accusing the wire-drawers, goldsmiths, refiners, merchants and Jews.

By the time of the Restoration Violet had created many enemies and two pamphlets attacking him were quickly published. In 1660 Richard Pight of the mint complained in a petition of Violet's conduct to him, "That your Petitioner by the malice of one Violet, hath suffered unjustly much trouble and disgrace"⁽⁷⁾ and in the same year an anonymous pamphlet was printed to disclose his practices. It begins "Thomas Violet, a name too sweet for so foule a carkass that his birth was at sea ... ingendred between a poor Dutch Fidler and a Moorish woman. How he came into England without the help of the Devil, or even got into the repute to be intrusted in any man's service as an Apprentice, and to become a member of this famous City of London, I am altogether ignorant."⁽⁸⁾

Thomas Violet died in 1662/3 and his nuncupative will was proved in 1663.

2. Motivation

For some years I have been interested in the coinage trials of 1651 between David Ramage and Peter Blondeau. Whilst Ramage and Blondeau's activities appear regularly in the Calendar of State Papers Domestic, the earliest printed reference I have found to the trials is from Thomas Violet in 1653⁽⁹⁾. Ruding adds a little more to the story⁽¹⁰⁾ and points to another work published by the Corporation of Moneyers, again involving pages from Violet, also dated 1653⁽¹¹⁾. More recently a work on the life of Thomas Violet revealed just how prolific a writer and petitioner Violet had been, listing 15 works dated between 1643 and 1662⁽¹²⁾.



Composite image from Violet (1653), pp173-174⁽¹⁾.

Thus the search began trying to find works by Violet; printed copies, either originals or reproductions and failing that online versions such as scanned pdfs or plain text files. It quickly became clear that this is quite a challenge.

The chase started with the British Library catalogue. There is some duplication, which may include subtle variations in printing, but the 39 entries can be reduced to a list of 24 separate works. This does include the 1660 tract *The Great Trappaner* which is about Thomas Violet, rather than authored by him. Then to google and searches to find readable copies in any form. One of the scanned documents revealed a new petition from 1660, bringing the total corpus to 25. A great resource for plain text versions of documents and books is EEBO, the Early English Books Online website, where most of the works can be found⁽¹³⁾.

The pages that follow include a chronological listing of the 25 works (just by year, not counting exact date), with, where possible fully expanded titles and web links to where text or pdf copies can be found. The final three pages summarises the listing with images of the title pages of 14 of the works that have been found online.

It is hoped this bibliography will be of use to others working in this interesting period of numismatics and economics.

References and Acknowledgements

- (1) I. Pickford (ed.). *Jackson's Silver & Gold Marks of England, Scotland & Ireland*. 3rd edition 1991. pp 114 and 242.
- (2) C. Jackson. *English Goldsmiths and Their Marks*. 1905. p 117.
- (3) A. McConnel. Thomas Violet. *ODNB* 2004. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ref:odnb/28329>
- (4) C.W. Sutton. Thomas Violet. *Dictionary of National Biography*, 1885-1900, v58.
- (5) T. Violet. Reasons submitted by Thomas Violet to the Mint Committee to prove the necessity of making farthing tokens etc. *Calendar of State Papers Domestic: Interregnum*, vol. 16: 10 August 1651. pp 301-394.
- (6) C.E. Challis. *A New History of the Royal Mint*. 1992. pp294, 322.
- (7) R. Pight. *To the Right Honourable, the Lords and Commons assembled in Parliament. The humble petition of Richard Pight, Clerk of the Irons in the Mint, in the Tower of London*. 1660.

- (8) Anon. *The Great trappaner of England discovered being a true narrative of many dangerous and abominable practices of one Thomas Violet Goldsmith to trappan the Jews and to ruine many scores of families in and about London*. 1660. p1.
- (9) T. Violet. *Mysteries, and Secrets of Trade and Mint-affairs*. 1653. pp.173-174.
- (10) R. Ruding. *Annals of the Coinage of Great Britain and its Dependencies*. 1840. v1 p414.
- (11) The Corporation of Moneyers. *The ansvver of the Corporation of Moniers in the Mint*. 1653.
- (12) A. Tubb. *Thomas Violet, A sly and dangerous fellow*. Rowman and Littlefield, 2018. p146.
- (13) <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebogroup/> this is open access rather than the official page which can only be accessed from libraries.

Many thanks to Douglas Saville for listing some of the volumes he has handled over the years and for providing the inspiration for work presented here.

3. The Catalogue

Each entry is given a number comprising the year of publication and a digit to distinguish the publications in that year. As some of the titles are very long, a brief part is highlighted in red that allows quick identification. Web links are given in blue with plain text sources typically ending =fulltext and scanned works ending in =pdf.

[1643-1] *An humble declaration to the right honourable the Lords and Commons in Parliament assembled, touching the transportation of gold and silver, and other abuses practised upon the coyne and bullion of this realm, presented the 12th day of April, 1643. Wherein is Declared the great mischeifes that have befallen the Common-wealth, by the above-said misdemeanours.*

Thomas Violet, England Printed by R.H. 1643.

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A65082.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>

[1643-2] *A Cunning plot to divide and destroy the Parliament and the City of London. Made knowne (at a Common Hall) by the Earle of Northumberland, Master Solliciter [O. Saint-John] and Sir Henry Vane. The design is fully discovered in the: severall examinations and confessions of Master Riley, Sir Basill Brook, Master Violet. Proclamations from His Majesty. Letters from His Majesty. Letters from the Lord Digby. Letters from Colonell Read.*

England and Wales. Parliament. London : P. Cole, 16 January 1643.

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A81180.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>

[1647-1] *To the right honourable the Lord Maior, aldermen, and common counsell of the City of London. These etc.* [The petition of T. V. praying the Lord Mayor, etc. to use their interest with both Houses of Parliament to obtain his release from prison, etc.

Thomas Violet

[London], [1647]

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A65087.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>

[1647-2] *[A Copy Of His Maiesties Most Gracious Letter TO THE LORD Major and Aldermen of his City of London, and all other his wel-affected Subjects of that City. [28 Dec. 1643.]]*

Includes a copy of Thomas Violet's letter from prison.

[London], [1647]

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/B18948.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext;q1=thomas+violet>

[1650-1] *A true discovery to the commons of England how they have been cheated* of almost all the gold and silver coyn of this nation, which hath been, and is daily transported into forraign parts. And how the people of this nation are, and have been abused by light and clipped English money, and the means shewed for the prevention thereof. Humbly presented to the Parliament of the Common-wealth of England. By Thomas Violet a true lover of his countrey.

Thomas Violet, London Printed by W.B. and are to be sold by W. Sheares ... 1650.

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A71218.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>

[1651-1] *The Advancement of Merchandize*: or, Certain Propositions for the Improvement of the Trade of this Commonwealth, humbly presented to the Right Honorable the Council of State, etc. [With "A True Discoverie to the Commons of England, how they have been Cheated of almost all the Gold and Silver Coin of this Nation," etc.]

Thomas VIOLET, London : William Du-Gard, 1651.

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A95984.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext> first part

[1653-1] *A True Narrative Of som remarkable-Proceedings concerning the ships* Samson, Salvadore and George, and severall other Prize-ships, depending in the Admiralty; humbly presented to the Parliament of the Common-wealth of England, and Councell of State, and the Councell of Officers of his Excellency the Lord GENERALL.

Thomas Violet, England printed by William Du-Gard 1653.

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A95991.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>

[1653-2] *Mysteries, And Secrets Of Trade and Mint-affairs*: With several REASONS against transporting Treasure; and waies set down for preventing the same: formerly presented to the Right Honorable the Lord Bradshaw, (at whose desire I undertook this pains,) and presented it to the late Council of State: and now enlarged, and humbly presented to this present Parlament of the Commonwealth of ENGLAND, in Aug. 1653

Thomas Violet, England Printed by William Du-Gard 1653.

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A95988.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>

[1653-3] *[The Advancement of Merchandize.] Mysteries and Secrets of Trade and Mint-affairs ... Now enlarged and ... presented to this present Parlament ... in Aug. 1653.*

Thomas VIOLET, London : Printed by William Du-Gard, 1653. [?same as 1651-1 bound with 1653-2]

[1653-4] *The ansvver of the Corporation of Moniers in the Mint*, at the Tower of London, to two false and scandalous libells printed at London, and lately come forth without date. The first intituled, The humble representation of Peter Blondeau, as a warning touching severall disorders hapning by money ill-favouredly coyned, and the only means to prevent them. The second intituled, A most humble memorandum from Peter Blondeau. Which not only intends maliciously to sandall [sic] us the Corporation of Moniers, of the Common-wealth of England: but also most falsly to imprint in the hearts and mindes of all people in Christendome, and more especially the good people under the obedience of the Parliament of England; that (by us the Corporation of Moniers) the moneys of this Common-wealth, both for gold and silver, are not justly made, according to our indenture. Set forth to undeceive all the good people that have seen or read the said Peter Blondeau's false and scandalous libells.

Corporation of Moniers in the Mint (London, England), 1653.

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A95986.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>

[1656-1] *Proposals Humbly Presented To his Highness Oliver Lord Protector of England*, &c. and to the High Court of Parliament, now assembled; For the calling to a true and just Accompt all Committee-men, Sequestrators, Treasurers, Excize and Custom-Commissioners, Collectors of Monethly Assessments, and all other Persons that have been entrusted with the Publick Revenue; or have in their Custody any thing of value appertaining to the Commonwealth. WITH Several Reasons for the Doing thereof, and the Waies how it may bee exactly done, and several Presidents by Acts of Parliament for the due and strict execution of the same; for the Honor of God, and Ease of the good People of this Nation in general in their Taxes. ALSO, For the Regulating of the Manufacture of Gold and Silver Thread and Wyer; and for the passing an Act against Transporting Gold and Silver, and against Melting down the Currant Silver Monies of the Nation. LIKEWISE, A Narrative of the Proceedings in the Court of Admiraltie against the Silver-Ships, Sampson, Salvador, and George.

Thomas Violet, England s.n. 1656.

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A65084.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>

[1657-1] *A true relation of an imposition layed by the late king upon the manufactures of gold & silver-wyer* to be used in the making of gold & silver thred, &c. : Which was voted by the grand Committee of Parliament to be a monopoly. / Written by one that was well acquainted with all the proceedings. ;

Published by D.T. a lover of truth.

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A95573.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext;q1=thomas+violet>

[1659-1] *A true discovery to the Commons of England*, how they have been cheated of almost all the gold and silver coyn of this nation, which hath been, and is daily transported into forraign parts; and how the people of this nation are, and have been, abused by light and clipped English money, etc.

Thomas VIOLET, London, 1659.

https://books.google.com/books/download/A_true_discovery_to_the_Commons_of_Engla.pdf?id=RnAAAAcAAJ&output=pdf

[1659-2] *A true narrative of the proceedings in the Court of Admiraltie against the ships Sampson, Salvador, and George*, their silver and lading and an accompt presented what silver was taken out of the said ships, and coined in the tower (being above two hundred seventy eight thousand pounds), all which silver the common-wealth got by the chargeable prosecution and discovery of Tho. Violet, who saved the common-wealth this silver, Dec. 16, 1652 ... : together with several humble proposals, for the profit and honour of this common-wealth, in saving them many score of thousand pounds

Thomas Violet, London s.n. 1659.

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A65091.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>

[1660-1] *To the Kings Most Excellent Majesty: and to the Lords Spiritual and Temporal; and the Commons assembled in Parliament. The humble petition of Thomas Violet* [requesting the confirmation of a patent for the surveying, sealing and assaying of the manufacture of gold and silver wire and lace], etc.

Thomas VIOLET [1660?].

http://access.bl.uk/item/viewer/ark:/81055/vdc_100087554996.0x000001#?c=0&m=0&s=0&cv=0&xylwh=-654%2C-148%2C3484%2C2947

[1660-2] *To the right honourable Lords in Parliament assembled. The humble petition of Thomas Violet Goldsmith*. [Praying for compensation, by an appointment in the Mint, for losses and sufferings

endured in consequence of bringing a letter of peace to London from King Charles I.-With the King's letter, etc.]

Thomas VIOLET [London], [1660].

https://books.google.com/books/download/To_the_Lords_in_Parliament_assembled_The.pdf?id=ilxjAAAacAAJ&output=pdf

[1660-3] ***The Great trappaner of England discovered*** being a true narrative of many dangerous and abominable practices of one Thomas Violet Goldsmith to trappan the Jews and to ruine many scores of families in and about London : the chief part hereof being sworn before Justice Powell and Justice Blomer and for the rest sufficient and plentiful witnesses are ready to be produced.

Anonymous, but a contemporary tract about Thomas Violet [London], 1660.

https://books.google.com/books/download/The_Great_Trappaner_of_England_Discovere.pdf?id=iFxiAAAacAAJ&output=pdf

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A41947.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>

[1660-4] ***To the supream authority the Parliament of England, &c. The humble petition of Tho. Violet goldsmith***

Thomas Violet, England s.n. 1660.

https://archive.org/details/ldpd_10887656_000

[1660-5] ***To the right honourable the Lord Mayor, Mr. Recorder and the rest of the Justices for the Peace for London and Middlesex. The humble petition of Thomas Violet goldsmith.***

Thomas Violet, England s.n. 1660. [This link includes several printed documents all dated 1659]

<https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=nnc2.ark:/13960/t5w69700m&view=1up&seq=11>

[1660-6] ***An Appeal To Caesar: Wherein Gold And Silver Is Proved to be the Kings Majesties Royal Commodity.*** Which By the Lawes of the Kingdom, no Person of what Degree soever, but the KINGS MAJESTIE, and his Privy Councel, can give Licence to Transport either Gold or Silver to any Person, after it is Landed in any part of the Kingdome of England. That this Great and Sacred Trust cannot be changed into the Hands of any Person, Persons, or Corporations whatsoever, without changing or diminishing the Sacred Power of his Majestie, it being against his Crown and Dignity. Humbly Presented to his Most Sacred MAJESTIE, and his Most Honourable Privy Councel, in opposition to some Merchants, who are Endeavouring, upon feigned Pretences, to dispossesse his Majestie of this Royal Trust, and to have it Confirmed by Act of Parliament, to Transport at the Merchants pleasure, Forreign Bullion and Coine freely, after it is Imported into the Kingdom, and make it a Free Merchandize for their private profit, to the Damage of the whole Kingdom in general.

[With an appendix, containing the petition of T. V., etc.]

Thomas VIOLET, London, 1660.

[Sometimes bound with plates of coins of Elizabeth.]

<https://www.rct.uk/collection/1081214/an-appeal-to-caesar-wherein-gold-and-silver-is-proved-to-be-the-kings-majesties> title page and covers only.

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A65081.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>

[1661-1] ***Two Petitions Of Thomas Violet of London Goldsmith, To The Kings Majestie: I. Seting forth the great abuses practised by the makers of Gold and Silver Thread, Wire, Lace, to the great waste***

of the Stock and Treasure of the Kingdome, in culling and melting down the heavy currant Silver. II. One hundred & twelve several parcels of course and adulterate Silver Lace, sould for good Silver by several Shopkeepers in London; all these assayes certified under the hands of Mr. Alexander Jackson, who is sworne Assay-Master at Goldsmiths Hall, which Silver was course and adultrate, under Sterling, being all wrought against the Law. III. Ten several Heads or Branches certified by the Committee of Trade the 17th of June 1657. seting forth the several abuses in making Gold and Silver Lace, Wire, and Thread; and several waies set down for the preventing the same for the future, to which I humbly referre. IV. Thomas Violet's Petition to the Right Honourable, several LORDS of the PRIVY COUNCIL, who are appointed a Committee for the removing the obstructions of the Mint, that their Honours would be be pleased to take Order for the Regulating of this Trade, and prevent the abuses put upon the wearers of Gold and Silver Lace, and for their fuller information, that an Order may be directd from the LORDS of the COUNCIL to the Company of Goldsmiths, requiring them for His MAIESTIES service, that they forthwith take into consideration, to present to your Lordships such Rules, Orders, and Instructions for the due vending, and uttering of the said Manufactures, as they in their great experience shall find most necessary for the ends expressed.

Thomas Violet, London : [s.n.], Printed Anno Dom. 1661. Great Britain England London.

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A65092.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>

[1661-2] *A petition against the Jewes presented to the Kings Majestie and the Parliament* : together with several reasons proving the East-India trade, the Turkey trade, the East-countray trade, may all be driven without transporting gold or silver out of England, and also some abuses in the managing those trades set down, etc.

Thomas Violet, England s.n. 1661. [BL, not found open access online]

[1662-1] *The case of Thomas Violet citizen and goldsmith of London*, before the Honourable Committee of Parliament, for regulating the abuses in making gold and silver wyre, and lace.

[London], [1662].

<https://books.google.com/books/download/The Case of Thomas Violet Citizen and Go.pdf?id=P3pmAAAacAAJ&output=pdf>

<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A78279.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>

[1662-2] *To the Kings Most Excellent Majesty and to the Lords spiritual and temporal*, with the Commons assembled in Parliament : a true discovery of the great damage His Late Majesty, King Charles the First, received by Sir Paul Pindar and the rest of the comminssioners in their managing His Late Majesties impost and custom, from the year 1626 to 1639 ... : here is likewise humbly offered to Your Majesty and the Parliament a modell for collecting Your Majesties customes for the future.

Thomas VIOLET [London], [1662].

<https://books.google.com/books/download/To the Kings Majesty and to the Lords wi.pdf?id=iVxjAAAacAAJ&output=pdf>

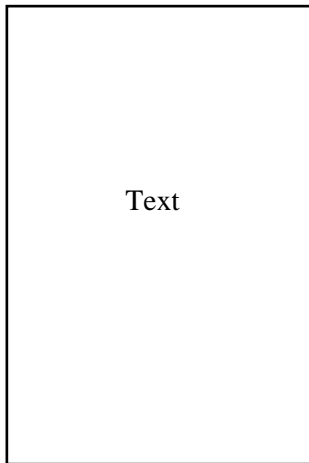
<https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A65085.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>

[1662-3] *An appeal to Caesar wherein gold and silver is proved to be the Kings Majesties royal commodity*, which no person of what degree soever but the Kings Majestie and his Privy Councel, can give licence to transport either gold or silver to any person after etc.

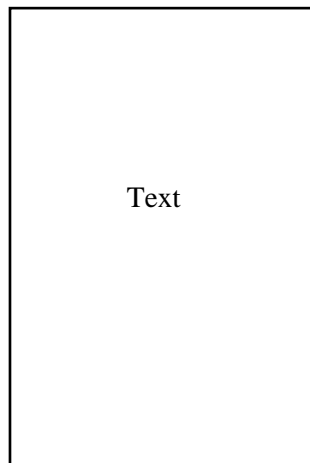
Thomas Violet, England s.n. 1662. [BL catalogue, not found elsewhere]

4. Summary

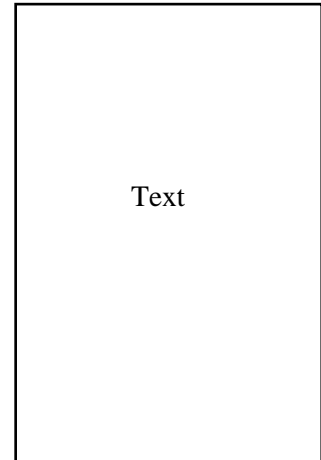
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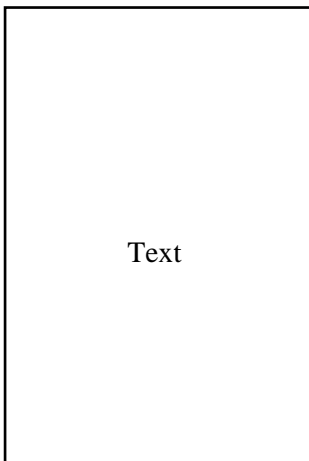
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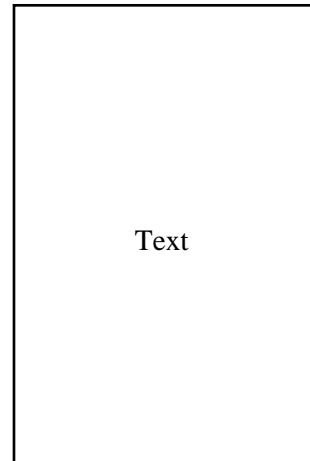
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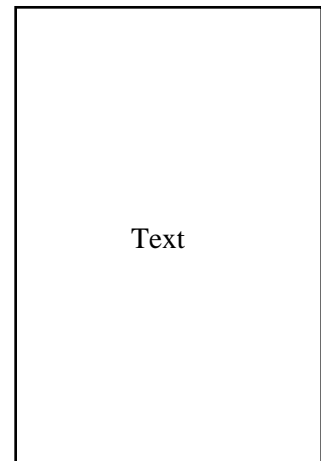
1647-1



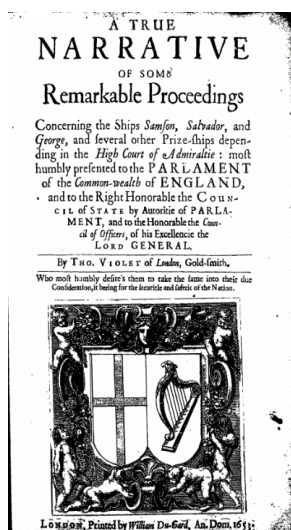
1647-2



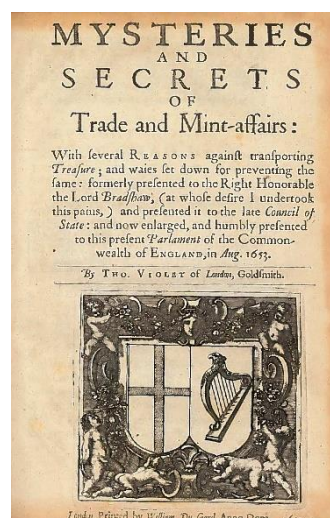
1650-1



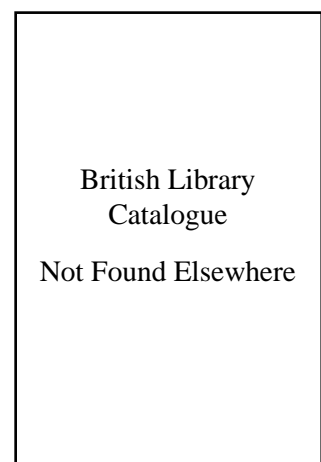
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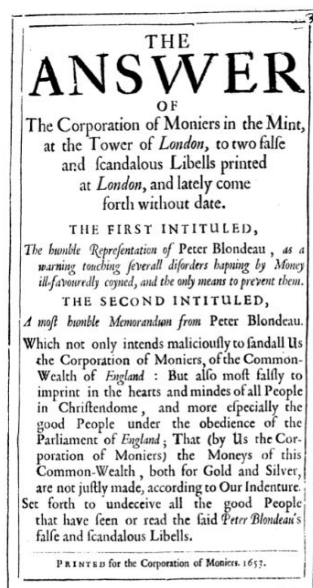
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1653-2

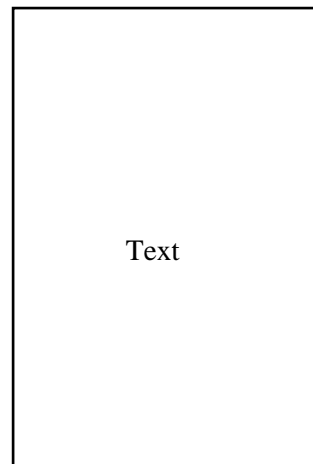


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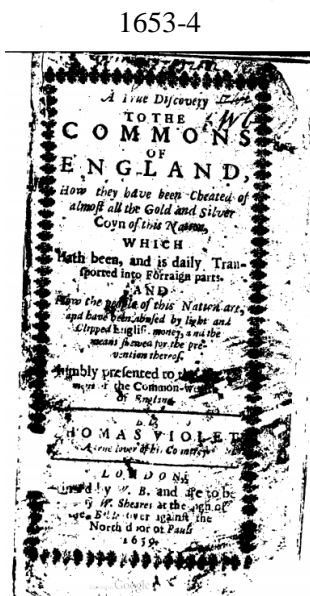
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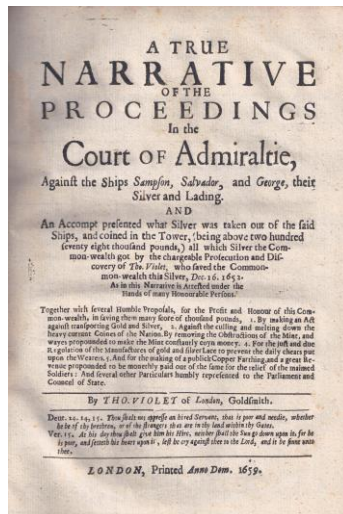


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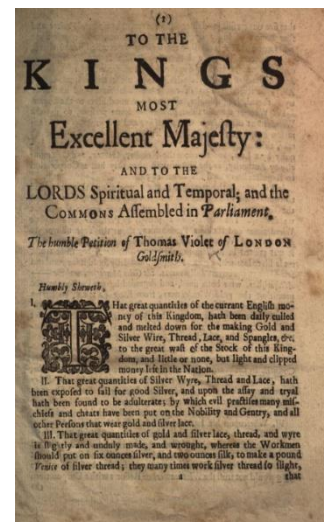
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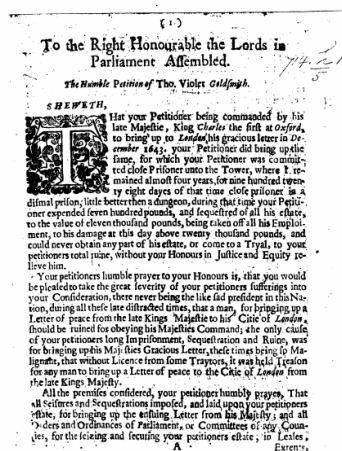
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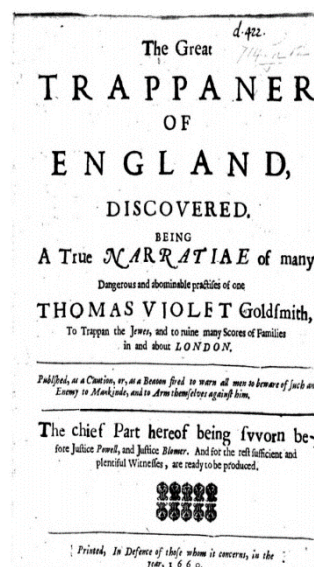
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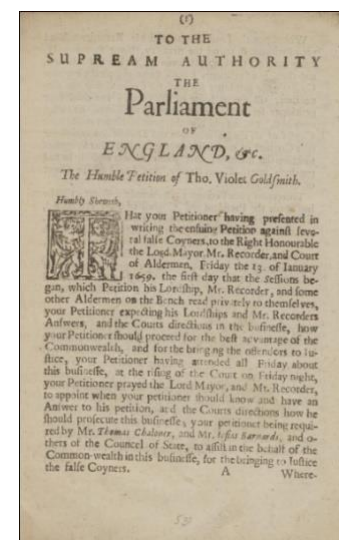
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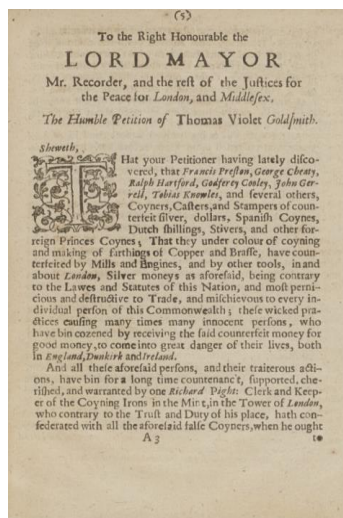
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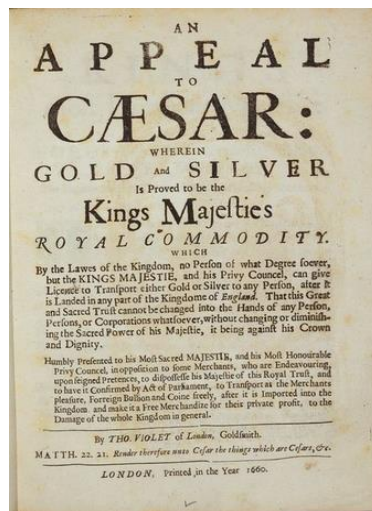
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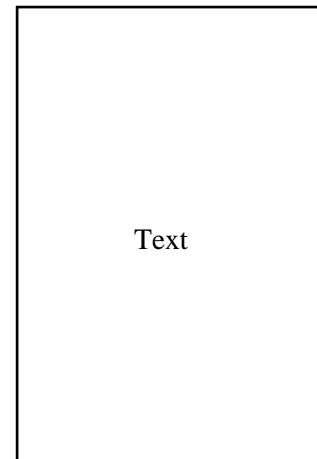
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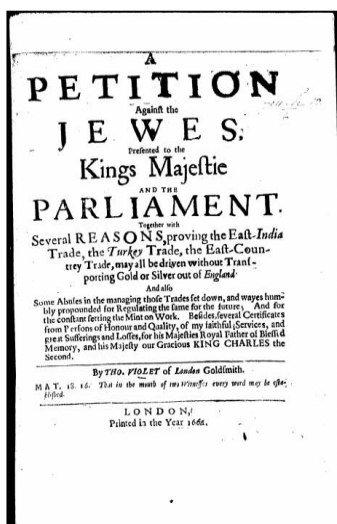
1660-5



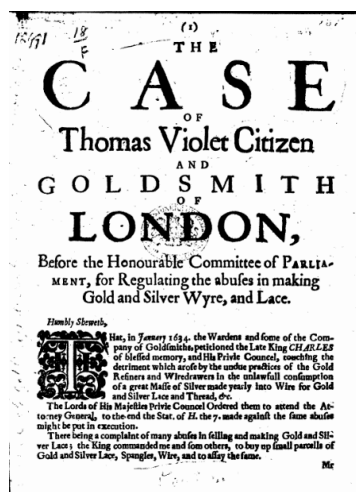
1660-6



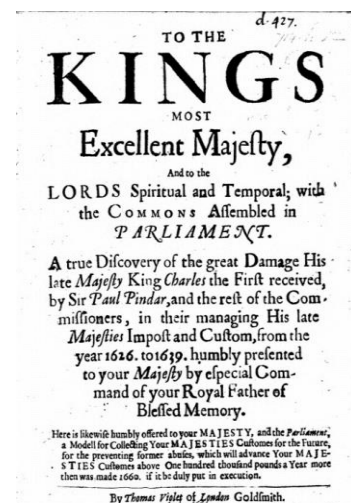
1661-1



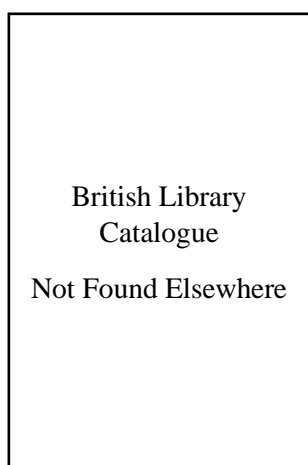
1661-2



1662-1



1662-2



1662-3

