The Bibliographical History of *The Spectator*

Stephen Bernard

Between Thursday 1 March 1711 and Monday 20 December 1714, Joseph Addison and Richard Steele’s *Spectator* was published in 635 separate thrice-weekly folio sheets by Samuel Buckley and Jacob Tonson. The first collected edition of *The Spectator* was published by the same booksellers in eight attractive duodecimo or large paper volumes between 1712 and 1715, whilst the journal was still being issued. This was to be reprinted throughout the eighteenth century, at first in numbered editions (up to the thirteenth edition) and later in unnumbered editions. Throughout the eighteenth century the Tonsons continued to publish the text, but as the century progressed other publishers were to publish collected and selected editions, starting with Charles Beckingham’s one-volume selection in 1720.

Addison’s *Spectator* essays were published separately and collectively first in an edition by Thomas Tickell in *The Works of the Right Honourable Joseph Addison* (1721), an edition which was also published by the Tonsons. John Baskerville published the finest edition of Addison’s *Spectator* essays in his clear Baskerville type in Birmingham in 1761.

The first translation of *The Spectator* was into French (1721). In 1753 ‘beauties’ from *The Spectator* began to be published. The first edition to have plates was the first Tonson collected edition, but the first properly illustrated edition of *The Spectator* was also the first to be annotated, by John Nichols in 1797; the finest illustrated edition was to follow almost a century later, illustrated by Hugh Thomson (1886); most editions from the nineteenth century onwards contain reproductions (as engravings or mezzotints) of the ‘Kit-Cat’ portraits of Addison (NPG 3193) and Steele (NPG 3227), commissioned by Tonson from Sir Godfrey Kneller. In the late eighteenth century collected uniform editions with other journals began to be published, starting in 1786.

There were other developments in the publication of *The Spectator*: selections of the essays were published for schoolchildren (to translate into Latin 1858) and also as selections, at first as ‘moral’ collections (1720) and then as collections of humorous essays (1850). In the nineteenth century *The Spectator* started to be published in critical selected editions (1804). This was followed by the publication of a selected edition by a University Press in the edition of the Clarendon Press at Oxford University Press (1885). The apotheosis of *The Spectator* came in a full critical edition edited by Donald F. Bond for that Press (1965), the only full edition in the twentieth century apart from the Everyman Edition (1907), which was periodically reprinted. Later in the twentieth century selected editions for students began to be published at first by Oxford University Press (1970), followed by Penguin Books (1982), and as an exemplary text in cultural studies by Macmillan (1998). One pattern that can be noted in the publication of *The Spectator* is that the eighteenth century was that of complete editions in multi-volume sets, the nineteenth century was that of selections, and in the twentieth century there were far fewer editions than had previously been published even though the text entered the scholarly canon.

Bibliographically the most interesting edition of *The Spectator* published so far is a selected edition, which also had original folio sheets tipped in, published in a limited edition by the Grabhorn Press in the United States (1939). The first online edition of *The Spectator* was Bond’s published by Oxford University Press in 2014. This bibliography is only taken from...
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the holdings of libraries in the United Kingdom and the United States of America. It includes British Library shelfmarks for ease of reference. The Library’s holdings are considerable, but as can be seen very far from complete.¹

A bibliography of editions of and selections from *The Spectator* 1712-2014


¹ I should like especially to thank Barry Taylor, Curator Romance Collections, British Library and Jonathan Pledge, Curator Contemporary Archives and Manuscripts, British Library for their time-consuming and generous help in preparing this preliminary work for the eBLJ; also William Poole, New College, Oxford, for his advice. For their support, I should like also to thank the Master and Fellows of University College.

Hazel Wilkinson, University of Birmingham, will this year be publishing an essay on the publication history of complete editions of *The Spectator* up to 1812, with full collations, in a volume of essays which will accompany the *Non-Periodical Works of Addison*, edited by Paul Davies and Henry Power, 3 vols (Oxford, 2019).
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http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&source=gale&prodId=ECCO&userGroupName=blibrary&tabID=T001&docId=CW117143834&type=multipage&contentSet=ECCOArticles&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE

NB destroyed; Second World War


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55  [Anon.,] A General Index to the Spectators, Tatlers and Guardians, 12mo (London: W. Owen, 1757) no shelfmark


59  Addison, Joseph, and Richard Steele, et al., *A Collection from The Spectator, Tatler, Guardian, Mr Pope, Mr Dryden, from Mr. Rollin’s Method of Teaching and Studying the Belles Lettres, and his Universal History. For the benefit of English schools*, ed. John Wardon, teacher of English, 12mo (Newcastle upon Tyne: John Warden, 1761) General Reference Collection 12270.b.9

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64  [Addison, Joseph,] *A Critique and Notes upon the Paradise Lost. From The Spectator*, 12mo (London: A. Millard, and R. Dorsley [sic], 1764) General Reference Collection, DRT Digital Store RB.23.a.6951


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158  Addison, Joseph, and Richard Steele, *The Spectator, With Notes and Illustrations*, 6 vols, 12mo (Edinburgh: [s.n.], 1845) no shelfmark


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171  Addison, Joseph, *Addison's Humorous Essays, Selected from The 'Spectator', With a Memoir of the Author*, 16mo, illus (London and Edinburgh: William and Robert Chambers, 1863) General Reference Collection 12270.aa.10

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