NOTES ON THE POST-POSITION OF ADJECTIVES IN MODERN ENGLISH

HENRY LOWICK-RUSSELL

Area de Inglés

Students of elementary English tend to make sweeping statements concerning the grammar of the language, e.g., "It is flat, simple, with scanty use of number and gender".

All such statements are erroneous and the student of more advanced English more often than not flounders in a veritable slough of difficulties in this rich and variegated language.

Most students —and sometimes even teachers— think that adjective usage is elementary in English. Far from it: there are over thirty different grammatical elements that may be used as adjectives.

The purpose of the following notes is to attempt to clarify some aspects concerning the position of adjectives.

According to Henry Sweet, in his New English Grammar: 1772. What appears to be the original Aryan word-order is preserved in the early Sanskrit prose.

1773. In a normal Aryan declarative sentence the subject is followed by its modifier the verb, but otherwise pre-adjunct order prevails; thas genitives and *Adjectives precede their nouns.*

1781. But post-order is frequent in Old English with quantitative adpectives: *his suna twegen* (his two sons); *hie butu* (both of them) *waeter genog* (Modern English has both 'enough (of) water', and 'water enough' the latter being less emphatic).

The differences in meaning are rarely clear to the foreigner. 'Visible blemishes' is not the same as 'the blemishes visible'. In this last case we may speak of a reduced relative clause: 'the blemishes (that are) visible . . .'

The student faces many pitfalls. He is told, for example, that "complex, indefinite pronouns ending in —body, —one, —thing, can be modified only postpositively" (Quirk et al.: A Grammar of Contemporary English). Then he hears someone saying: "Here's a little something for you", without realizing that in this case 'something' is not a pronoun but a noun (In Spanish we would say 'una cosita').

Or again, when he sees an adjective following a noun to form another adjective, such as 'bone-idle' (idle to the very bone) after which he comes across 'bone-white' and 'bone-black'. All this puzzles the student, who does not easily see that 'white' and 'black' are nouns in this case, a) an off-shade of white, and b) a fine charcoal. And what about "raven-black', 'a black as black as a raven'?

There are cases in which the past participle of a verb acquires a different meaning when it is used as an adjective, e.g., 'fear-ridden', obsessed, metaphorically ridden by fear. These adjectives invariably follow the noun and form new adjectives. Many of them have been in the language for a long time. See, for example, 'bedridden' (Anglo-Saxon bedreda, from bedd, plus rida, a rider).

I shall not examine the post-position of adjectives in poetry, in cases where attributive

position is the norm elsewhere in the language.

Let us return to the *adjective proper*. We shall see that in many cases the post-position is used in legal terms. In many cases it is a matter of style. In some cases the meaning changes. And at times its use is a whimsical coinage, such as *the body beautiful*.

These notes deal with only single adjectives. Whenever we use more than one adjective there is a certain tendency to use them post-positively: 'things *great and small;* 'a palefaced Syrian girl watched impassively with features *regular, sensuous and biblical*'.

A writer makes use of the *sum total* of the wealth of resources at his disposal. In the words of Simeon Potter (Our Ianguage).:

"The English sentence . . . is something of a paradox. Word order has become more significant than hitherto, far more important than in Old, Middle or Tudor English, and yet it has retained enough of its elasticity to give to the skilful speaker all the scope and power he needs. We English have inherited our sentences-patterns, but we have abundant freedom to vary words, phrases and clauses within those inherited patterns".

The following examples of the post-position of adjectives in Modern English have been taken from many sources of different kinds, novels, the daily press, history, books of travel, literature in general.

ALERT GENERAL. *"Alert General!* All Pickets, all Sectors! Full fleet Laggi attack . . . we are overmatched! *Alert General!* (Gordon R. Dickson: The Immortal. F. & S. Fiction, p. 96, Aug. 65)

ANYTHING GERMAN. "It's all very apparent today, this spirit of 'leben und leben lassen' – a cheery apathy and beery tolerance combined with a benign condescension toward *anything German.* (Time, Aug. 7, 72; p. 28, col. 1)

Complex indefinite pronouns ending in –body, –one, –thing, –wehre, can be modified only postpositively.

"It is said a bride must wear *something old, something new, something blue,* etc. (something that is old, that is new, that is blue)

AMBASSADOR PLENIPOTENTIARY: one having the power to make treaties. See under 'extraordinary': *ambassador extraordinary.*

In both cases the post-position is due to the fact that these expressions have been taken from the French, the language of diplomacy for a long time.

APLENTY. adj. and adv.: in abundance. The adjective *plenty* is colloquial in expressions such as 'plenty tired', it's 'plenty late'. The adj. *aplenty* follows the noun. "Even without such shocks, there are troubles *aplenty*". (Time, Oct. 3, 77; p. 39, col. 3)

ASTRONOMER ROYAL: cp. the *Poet Laureate,* the *Painter Laureate.* Sovereigns in the Middle Ages had their official jesters. In our days the sovereign dignifies other callings, such as these, appointing them to be a member of the Royal Household.

"The present *Astronomer Royal,* Sir Harold Spencer Jones, established the current values (of the various distances in the solar system) about ten years ago".

(Fred Hoyle: The Nature of the Universe).

BARONS PALATINE. Palatine, of a palace; having royal privileges: a *count palatine,* an *earl palatine.* In England, during Tudor times, there were *Counts Palatine* of Chester, of Durham, of Lancaster.

"About him (Louis the Sixth of France) in the sultry room were gathered some of his prelates and *barons palatine".*

(Amy Kelly: Eleanor of Acquitaine, p. 1)

BEND SINISTER
BAR SINISTER: popular term in literature

for *bend sinister. Bend sinister,* in Heraldry, is a band or stripe on a coat of arms from the upper right to the lower left corner (as seen by the viewer); it signifies bastardy in the family line.

"So long as there remained princes of the House of Lancaster above suspicion of the *bend sinister* the sin of its founder would be visited upon his Beaufort progeny of the third and fourth generation"

(S. T. Bindoff: Tudor England, Pelican Editions, p. 45)

"King Charles II acknowledged fourteen bastards, openly went to church with them, even gave them titles (The present Duke of Richmond springs from the *bar sinister)*

(Time, Aug. 12, 63, p. 16, col. 2).

BATTLE ROYAL. plural *battles royal*

1. a fight or bout involving several or many contestants, a free-for-all; 2. a long, bitterly-fought battle; 3. a heated dispute.

Says one Israeli official: "If he tries to pressure us, there will be a *battle royal,* and it will be fought on American soil..."

(Time, Oct. 3, 77; p. 6, col. 2).

BELUGA GRAY. 'Beluga', in Russian, is a large, white sturgeon of the Black Sea and the Caspian Sea. *Beluga gray* is a slangy way of designating caviar, the salted eggs of sturgeon eaten as an appetizer.

"She pawned her jewels. The gems went for four million dollars, which should keep the maharanee in *Beluga gray* for a couple of years".

(Time, Jan. 20, 75; p. 44, col. 3; Amer. Ed.)

BETE NOIRE. A person or object of fear and aversion.

BILLET-DOUX, pl. *billets-doux,* a love letter.

"Lady Antonia Fraser... the former wife of Conservative M. P. Hugh Fraser... says she loves nothing more than to give and receive *billets-doux."*

(Time, Oct. 3, 77; p. 34, col. 3)

These two French expressions are included because they are occasionally used in English, either in conversation or written down, and because they help us to understand the way in which the French language has favoured the use of the post-position of the adjective in English.

BLOOD ROYAL. "The diffusion of the *blood royal* in the 14th century... had... created a situation in which no individual could boast an unimpeachable title".

(S. T. Bindoff: Tudor England, Pelican Edit. p. 44)

BODY BEAUTIFUL. The *body beautiful* is a slangily whimsical modern formation. (See: headline in the Reader's Digest, May 1941, p. 67.) "The title is a bit of a tease. It is borrowed from Tom Wesselmann's set of paintings of flawlessly skinned *bodies beautiful* works in the Matisse odalisque idiom..."

(The Times Literary Supplement, Sept. 5. 75; p. 999, col. 4)

BODY CORPORATE. Law: a corporation.

BODY POLITIC. the collective body of the people in its political capacity; in other words, the people who collectively constitute a political unit under a government (Originally, with reference to the headship of the sovereign).

"The King is a *body politick,* for that a *body politique* never dieth". John Milton.

"(We) combine ourselves together into a civil *body politic* (The Mayflower Compact, November 11, 1620)

"The police Department wore the *body politic* on its back like a lead suit. Political pressure was constant".

(Robert Daley: Target Blue (an insider's view of the Police Dept. Dell Pub. Co. 1973)

"It may be that Mr Nixon is banking on what social psychologists call the threshold

beyond which the *body politic* cannot go on thinking ill of its leadership or irself".
(Time Aug. 20, 73; p. 15, col. 3)
"The American *body politic* is basically healthy. Our people want to believe in their government".
(Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State, in Time, Oct. 27, 75; p. 15, col. 2)
It is clearly seen that this expression is healthy and robust in the English language.

BONE-DRY; BONE-IDLE; BONE-WEARY
These expressions are example of a phenomenon not infrequent in English; that is, the formation of an adjective by placing an adjective after a noun.
bone-idle means 'utterly idle, idle to the bone';
bone-dry: 1) very dry, as a bone that has lain exposed to the air; 2) absolutely abstaining from or prohibition the use of alcoholic drinks.
bone-weary means 'tired, weary to the very bone'.
"He hoped with a *bone-weary* self-lacerating bitterness that their ideas were better than his".
(Allen Drury: Come Niniveh, Come Tyre, p. 186)

CHURCH MILITANT. 'Militant' implies a vigorous espousal of a cause, movement, etc., and rarely suggests the furthering of one's own ends. "Abner belonged to the *church militant* and his God was a war lord"
(Melville D. Post: The Angel of the Lord)

CRYSTAL CLEAR. As clear as crystal. This adjective belongs in the same category as 'bone-dry" (see above).
"Yet truth is relative, and what was so *crystal clear* to George III was not even discerned by many of his subjects".
(J. H. Plumb: The First Four Georges).

COURT-MARTIAL. pl. *courts-martial;* for 2, now often *court-martials* 1) a court of personnel in the armed forces for the trial of offenses against military law, or of army or navy personnel; 2) a trial by a court-martial.
"At a regiment ball ... Millington makes an unsuccessful pass at Miss Marjorie Hazeltine, who has a sub rosa reputation for being a courtesan among young subaltern. She charges him with attacking her, and a regimental *court-martial* is convened".
(Time. Oct. 26, 70; p. 51, col. 1)
"Four N.C.O.s (noncommissioned Officers) have been convicted by *court-martial,* and the number is certain to grow".
(Time, Nov. 10, 70; p. 22, col. 3).

– DESIGNATE. A person who has been designated.
"Golda Meier is a caretaker Premier; the Labor Party's *Premier-designate,* Yitzhak Rabin (is) trying to form a coalition government".
(Time, May 13, 71; p. 7, col. 1)
"The *Secretary of State-designate* and the little justice were walking together down the drive to the East Gate".
(Allen Drury: Come Niniveh, Come Tyre).
"The accusations were aimed at Attorney-General John Mitchell's *successor-designate* Richard Kleindienst".
(Time, March 13, 72; p. 17, col. 1)

– ELECT. Elected, but not yet installed in office.
"They are willing to remain open-minded until the *President-elect* has a chance to prove himself".
(Time, Nov. 22, 68; p. 9, col. 3)
"The affair ruffled the *Vice President-elect's* (Hubert Humphrey's) usual good humor. Humphed he: 'Number one, it was a rental; number two, he just lost a good customer' ".
(Time, Dec. 18, 64; p. 13, col. 3)
"Of the Governors and *Governors-elect* who attended, virtually all had opposed Goldwater's nomination".
(Time, Dec. 11, 64; p. 15, col. 1)
"Senator Paul Douglas, of Illinois .... had

kindly recommended me to a host of Democratic Senators and *Senators-elect;* and among the later was Jack Kennedy".
(Theodore C. Sorensen: Kennedy, p. 12)
"Philadelphia: Frank Rizzo, the city's tough police commissioner . . . is now *mayor-elect.*"
(Time, Dec. 6, 71; p. 36, col. 2)

Earlier usage: the following example is placed apart because it does not mean 'elected to office'. Note: a spark is a gay, dashing young man; a beau or lover)
"But what was yet more surprising, her *spark-elect,* in the midst of the dissolution of a publick open enjoyment, doted on her to distraction, and had, by dint of love and sentiments, touched her heart".
(John Cleland: Memoirs of a Woman of Pleasure (Fanny Hill) 1749)

ENOUGH. (see *'wine enough'*)

EXTRAORDINARY. In the following examples *'deskman extraordinary* is a 'whimsical creation; *'musician extraordinary* is very rarely seen (this example appeared in an obituary); *'pursuivant appears only* in heraldry; *'ambassador extraordinary'* is in fairly common usage; and in the last example, *'diplomat extraordinaire'* we see again the influence of French, until lately the exclusive language of Western diplomacy.

1) DESKMAN EXTRAORDINARY: "Directing Time's 20 reporters was Chief of Correspondents Murray Gart. His principal command post was . . . was a row of seats and desks near the podium. Beside him sat his deputy and *deskman extraordinary* Dick Duncan".
(Time, A Letter from the Publisher; July 24, 72.)

2) MUSICIAN EXTRAORDINARY. "Be it remembered that on August 7, 1973, Robert White, *musician extraordinary,* beloved son, brother and cousin had his life cut untimely short while acting on the line of duty enforcing law in the state of Kansas, U.S.A.".
(Obit. in International Herald Tribune, Aug. 17-18, 1974, p. 14)

3) PURSUIVANT EXTRAORDINARY. Herald's College: a functionary ranking below a herald, but having similar duties.
"The Kings of Arms, Heralds and Pursuivants attend upon the Sovereign upon the occasion of such ceremonial as coronations, State Funerals . . . In Scotland (there are) four Pursuivants: Kyzntyre, Carrick, Unicorn and Falkland *(Pursuivant extraordinary)".*
(British Information Services: The Monarchy in Britain, p. 22)

4) AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY is one on a special diplomatic mission.

5) DIPLOMAT EXTRAORDINAIRE.
"As secret negociator, sumiteer and *diplomat extraordinaire* Kissinger has fascinated the Europeans".
(Time, Dec. 20, 76; p. 15, col. 1)

FEE SIMPLE. (Anglo-French) Law: absolute ownership (of land) with unrestricted rights of disposition.

FEE TAIL (Anglo-French): fee tailé; O.E. fief plus tailé, p.p. of 'tailler', to cut, limit) Law. Ownership (of land) restricted to a specified class of heirs.

FORM DIVINE. Slightly tongue-in-cheek usage.
"Australia Kellerman outgrew her childhood bowleggedness and developed a figure that earned her such accolades as the *form divine* and 'the diving Venus'.
(Time, Nov. 17, 75; p. 45, col. 3)

GALORE. Invariably placed after the noun; adverb, used here as an adjective: in large numbers or abundance. *Friends galore; books galore; affections galore; poets galore.*

"Not too long ago, Red China had *friends galore*".
(Time, Sept. 13, 63; p. 16, col. 1)
GENERAL. A second term in some nonmilitary titles, indicating superiority in rank.

a) ATTORNEY GENERAL, pl. ATTORNEYS GENERAL, ATTORNEY GENERALS.

Chief law officer; in U.S.A., the Head of the Department of Justice and member of the President's Cabinet.
"During the current dock strike the *Attorney General* contended that the failure of 200 Chicago longshoremen to load... corn and soybeans for export imperiled the national economy".
(Time, Dec. 20, 71; p. 44, col. 3)
"...only the *Attorney-General,* in the name of the Crown, can enter a nolle prosequi to discontinue such a prosecution.
(British Information Services: The Monarchy in Britain, p. 7)
"Call in the letters-patents that he hath
By his *attorneys general* to sue...
(Shakespeare: King Richard II; Act II, Scene 1)
"Opinions of the *Attorneys General*
(William Manchester: The Death of a President, p. 324, footnote)

b) AUDITOR GENERAL
"The Post Office, the Customs and the office of the *Auditor-General* have been 'Africanized' all through and run well".
(Elspeth Huxley: Four Guineas).

c) CLOTHIER GENERAL. "Washington appointed his *clothier-general* to the army and sent him away".
(Gore Vidal: Aaron Burr)

d) COMPTROLLER AND AUDITOR-GENERAL. England: an official with the same security of ternure as a judge, appointed since 1866 with two functions a) to authorize payments to the Treasusy from the consolidated fund after satisfying himself that they have parliamentary approval; and b) to examine the accounts of departments and report unauthorized or extravagant expenditure to the public accounts committee of the House of Commons.
"He (Voltaire) had an optimistic spell when his friend Turgot was made *controller general of finance*".
(Will and Ariel Durant: Rousseau and Revolution, p. 874)

e) CONSUL GENERAL. pl. CONSULS GENERAL; CONSUL GENERALS.
Consul stationed in a principal commercial city, who supervises other consuls within his district.
"Daniel Westberg, Information Officer, *Consulate General* of Japan".
(Time, Jan. 27, 75; p. 53, col. 2)
"Anxious to stanch the flow of immigrants, they (the Dutch Government) have offered the Surinamese what U.S. *Consul General*... calls 'the biggest golden handshake any colonialist power has conferred on a former colony".
(Time, Dec. 1, 75; p. 16, col. 2)

f) DIRECTOR-GENERAL. *Brigadier-general* Ephraim Poran, Begin's intelligence adviser, and Eliahu Ben-Eliassar, *director-general* of the Premier's office... and... and Dayan discussed the need for alternative diplomatic approaches in case of a Geneva conference impasse.
(Time, Oct. 3, 77; p. 7, col. 3)

g) GOVERNOR-GENERAL, pl. GOVERNORS-GENERAL; the GOVERNOR-GENERALS.
The immediate link between the Dominions and the Crown is the *Governor-General,* who was, prior to 1926, the representative, not only of the Crown but also of the British Go-

verment, whose views on matters affecting relations between Britain and the Dominions he was expected to represent to his Ministers. It was then decided that the *Governor-General* should become merely the representative of the Crown".

(A. Berriedale Keith: Br. Life and Thought; The British Commonwealth, Longmans, Green and Co., 1944)

"In Australia last week... the personal representative of Queen Elizabeth II, *Governor General* Sir John Kerr... fired Prime Minister Gough Whitlam. The *Governor General* also dissolved Parliament and proclaimed new elections for Australia's House and Senate on December 13".

(Time, Nov. 24, 75; p. 4, col. 1)

h) INSPECTOR GENERAL. An officer of high rank in the armed forces, in charge of overall supervision.

"Opposite him was General Friedrich A. Foertsch, *Inspector General* of Bonn's armed forces".

(William Manchester: The Death of a President, p. 214)

i) PAYMASTER GENERAL.

"The president of the council and the lord privy seal who, together with the chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster and the *paymaster-general* have the smallest departmental duties, are often senior colleagues to whom a prime minister delegates important tasks of planning or a general oversight of affairs".

(T. K. Derby: The United Kingdom, p. 54)

j) POSTMASTER GENERAL, pl. POSTMASTERS GENERAL; POSTMASTER GENERALS. The head of a government's postal system.

k) SECRETARY-GENERAL, pl. SECRETARIES-GENERAL. The chief administrative officer of an organization, in charge of a secretariat.

"United Nations *Secretary General* Kurt Waldheim... flew back and forth between Jerusalem and Damascus".

(Time, Dec. 8, 75; p. 7, col. 1)

l) "They treated former *Under Secretary General* Ralph Munch until his death last week".

(Time, Dec. 20, 71; p. 35, col. 1)

m) SOLICITOR GENERAL, pl. SOLICITORS GENERAL; SOLICITOR GENERALS.

"The rest of the number was made up of the four law officers, attorney-general and *solicitor-general,* and their counterparts for Scotland".

(T. K. Derby: The United Kingdom, p. 54)

n) SURGEON GENERAL, pl. SURGEONS GENERAL; SURGEON GENERALS.

1) The chief general officer or admiral in charge of the medical department of the U.S. Army, Air Force or Navy.

2) The chief medical officer in the U.S. Public Health service, or in some state health services.

"Even before the U.S. *Surgeon General's* 1964 report on smoking medical statistitians had amassed considerable evidence, linking cigarette smoking to lung cancer, heart and other ailments".

(Time, Sept. 1, 67; p. 12, col. 2)

o) STATES-GENERAL. (From the French *états généraux;* Dutch *staaten generaal.*

1) The legislative body in France before 1789, with representatives of the clergy, nobility and the third state;

2) The legislative assembly of the Netherlands.

GOD ALMIGHTY!

This is an interesting example which allows us to see the difference between pre- and post-collocation. "Almighty God! We are but

grains of sand in Thy hands" is a sentence we may hear any day in Church; but you say *"God almighty!"* with a tone of exasperation, when you are swearing. According to Henry Sweet: *'God almighty!* seems to be an imitation of the Latin order *(Deus omnipotens)*' It is interesting to note Shakespeare's use of the term in King Richard II (act III, scene 3):

King Richard: Yet know, my master, *God /omnipotent,*
Is mustering in his clouds, on our behalf,
Armies of pestilence, and they shall strike
Your children yet unborn and unbegot,
That lift your vassal hands against my /head,
And threat the glory of my precious crown.

HEIR - HEIRESS.: *heir apparent; heir designate; heir general; heir male; heir female; heir presumptive.*

It will be noticed that in legal terminology the difference of sexes appears in the adjective. Nowadays, of course, 'heiress' is the common usage.

a) HEIR APPARENT, pl. HEIRS APPARENT: the heir whose right to a certain property or title cannot be denied if he outlives the ancestor.

"The titles 'Prince of Wales' and 'Earl of Chester' are the subject of individual creation in each case, and do not belong to the Sovereign's eldest son by right; they were conferred on the present *Heir Apparent* in 1958".

(Brit. Inf. Services: The Monarchy in Britain, p. 4).

The term is loosely used by newspapermen: "He became (international banker) Freeman's vice chairman and *heir apparent* about two years ago".

(Time, Dec. 15; 75; p. 49, col. 2).

b) HEIR-DESIGNATE. "The government resolved a growing crisis of authority by pressuring a reluctant Prince Juan Carlos de Borbón y Borbón, Franco's *heir-designate,* to become his country's temporary Chief of State".

(Time, Nov. 10, 75; p. 13, col. 1).

c) HEIR GENERAL: heir-at-law, used to include d) HEIRS FEMALE.

e) HEIR MALE: an heir who is a male and who derives from the ancestor through males only.

f) HEIR PRESUMPTIVE, pl. HEIRS PRESUMPTIVE: an heir whose right to a certain property or title will be lost if someone more closely related to the ancestor is born before that ancestor dies.

"There is no ordained or prescriptive style for an *heir or heiress presumptive* (that is, the Prince or Princess who would succeed to the throne if the Sovereign had no son".

(Brit. Inf. Services: The Monarchy in Britain, p. 4).

"(Roy Jenkins) has made some powerful enemies within his own party, to be sure, but he has moved closer to becoming *heir presumptive* to Harold Wilson".

(Time, Nov. 22, 71; p. 14, col. 1).

(HERALDRY: the postposition of the adjective is almost mandatory in heraldry. See, e.g., *pieces argent; a chief azure; arrows gray.*

"Enter Nelson Rockefeller. The new Vice President publicly complained that the seal was 'aesthetically very weak'. In private, he was heard to describe his eagle of office as a 'wounded partridge' ... They lifted its wings, gave it 13 new arrows and drew in some clouds, stars and dotted lines to signify 'radiating glory' ... Last week the new seal was made official by a White House executive order that was resplendent with heraldic jargon: Paleways of 13 *pieces argent* and gules, a *chief azure;* upon the breast of an American eagle displayed holding in his dexter talon an olive branch proper and in his sinister

a bundle of 13 *arrows gray.*" Rockefeller and his assistants were pleased. Said one aide: 'This is an eagle that can fly'.
There are many terms in heraldry. Let us see another case: *rampant,* meaning rearing up on the hind legs, depicted thus in profile, with one forepaw raised above the other (a *lion rampant;* a *bear rampant)* Compare the metaphorical use of this term in Shakespeare (see *knight rampant).*

JOY UNRESTRAINED.
"Around (the President) there was *joy unrestrained* at this proof positive of how naked, political power, ruthlessly used, could smash any private citizen who got in its way".
(Time, April 27, 62; p. 46, col. 1).

KNIGHT BACHELOR: pl. *Knights Bachelors; Knights Bachelor.*
A member of the oldest and lowest class of British knights.

KNIGHT ERRANT: pl. KNIGHTS ERRANT
1) Medieval knight wandering in search of adventure, esp. ones which allow him to redress wrongs or show his prowess.
2) A chivalrous or quixotic person.

KNIGHT RAMPANT, pl. KNIGHTS RAMPANT.
"He had served for three years with the *Knights Rampant.* (see Heraldry). It was not the first broken neck he had seen."
(Robert Sheckley: Store of Infinity, Bantam Book, p. 135).
"(enter Scroop): *Knight Rampant* mine ear is."
(Shakespeare: Richard II, act III, scene 2)
Compare *lion rampant.* Here Shakespeare means an attentive hearer.

KNIGHT TEMPLAR; pl. KNIGHTS TEMPLARS 1).
KNIGHTS TEMPLAR 2).
1) A member of a military and religious order established among the crusaders early in the 12th century.
Plural: *knights templars.*
2) A member of a certain order of Freemasons.
Plural: *Knights Templar.*

LADY BOUNTIFUL. (After a character in Farquhar's comedy The Beaux' Stratagem, 1707; a charitable woman, esp. one who gives ostentatiously).
"If at times Ruth seemed to be a *Lady Bountiful* cradling a cornucopia that disgorged an endless stream of marvels, it must be remembered that with every gesture she was asserting her role as head of the new household".
(William Manchester: The Death of a President, Pan Books Ltd, London 1967).

LAST. The pre- or post-position of *last* is a matter of style in the case of the days of the week. Thus, we say, *Monday last, Tuesday last.... Sunday last.*

LETTERS: *letters credential; letters patent; letters testamentary.*

a) LETTERS CREDENTIAL: letter (or letters) of credence; formal document which a country's representative carries as his credentials to a foreign government.

b) LETTERS PATENT: a document granting some right or rights, esp. over an invention. Notice, in the following example, that Shakespeare uses the adjective with a plural *s.* King Richard II, Act II, scene 1:

> Take Hereford's rights away, and take from
> His charters and his customary rights...
> Now, afore God – God forbid I say true! –
> If you do wrongfully seize Hereford's /rights,
> Call in the *letters-patents* that he hath .....
> By his attorneys-general .....

"..... the holders of new peerages, created by royal *letters-patent*".
(T.K. Derby: The United Kingdom, pp. 29-30).
"The title of Royal Highness is accorded by *letters-patent* to all the monarch's children, and to the wives and children of the monarch's sons".
(British information services: The Monarchy in Britain, p. 4).

c) LETTERS TESTAMENTARY. Law. A document granted after probate of a will by the probate court or some officer who has authority, directing the person named as executor in the will to act in that capacity.

LORDS: *lords appellant; lords ordinary; lords temporal; lords spiritual.*

a) LORDS APPELLANT. Law. Appellant: a person who appeals, esp. to a higher court. As in the preceding example, Shakespeare also uses the plural with *s*.
King Richard II, Act IV, scene1:
Bolingbroke: Sweet peace conduct his sweet soul to the bosom
Of good old Abraham! *Lords appellants,*
Your differences shall all rest under gage
Till we assign you to your days of trial,

b) LORDS ORDINARY. They are the judges forming the Outer House of the Court of Session in England.

c) LORDS TEMPORAL: Those members of the British House of Lords who are not clergymen; the lay peers.
"The *lords temporal,* namely the heirs of those barons whom Edward I had summoned in 1295".
(T.K. Derby: The United Kingdom, pp. 29-30).

d) LORDS SPIRITUAL: The bishops and mitred abbots summoned in the Middle Ages to the meetings of the Lords.
Now, the archbishops and bishops (and formerly mitred abbots) in the House of Lords.
"Today the House of Lords has a membership of 1045, twice the number in 1911. Its hereditary peers number 865. Twenty-six bishops of the Church of England sit as *lords spiritual* and 154 life peers have been created under the 1958 act".
(Time, Nov. 10, 67; p. 17, col. 3).

MAJOR, as an adjective, indicates superior rank in a given class; e.g.: *sergeant-major.*

MALICE AFORETHOUGHT (or PROPENSE). Law. A deliberate intention and plan to do something unlawful, as murder.

MATTERS AESTHETIC: "In Italy, however, *matters aesthetic* are not always easy (Time, Aug. 31, 70; p. 44, col. 3).

MATTERS GASTRONOMIC.
"General de Gaulle, like Clemenceau, was never swayed by the advice of women except in *matters gastronomic*".
(Sanche de Gramont: The French, Portrait of a People).

MUSICAL TERMS: in this field we find postposition of the adjectives *major* and *minor; flat* and *sharp.* These terms are sometimes applied to other matters.
"Bach's Mass in *B-minor* is a masterpiece".
"They had campaigned and worked with the vibrant, shrewd young politician and President whose key had always been *C-major*".
(Wm. Manchester: The Death of a President, p. 489).

NOTARY PUBLIC, pl. NOTARIES PUBLIC; NOTARY PUBLICS.
An official authorized to certify or attest documents, take depositions and affidavits, etc.
"I'm a *notary public,* and not an accountant".
(Time, Oc 15, 75; p. 30, col. 2).

PAINTER LAUREATE. Laureate: worthy of honour; distinguished, pre-eminent.
"The best comment on Picasso's later role as a *Painter Laureate* to the French Communist Party... was made by Salvador Dali: 'Picasso is a Spaniard – so am I! Picasso is a genius – so am I! Picasso is a Communist – nor am I!".
(Time, Nov. 1, 71; p. 34, col. 2).

POET LAUREATE, pl. POETS LAUREATE; POET LAUREATES.
1) the court poet of England, appointed for life by the monarch to write poems celebrating official occasions, national events, etc.
2) the most respected poet of any nation or region.
"The Lord Chamberlain's office consists of ... the Master of the Queen's Music, the *Poet Laureate* ..."
(Br. Inf. Services: The Monarchy in Britain, p. 30).

> What more to say, but that I dearly wait
> Commanding Death's tense whisper at
> /the gate.

So speaks a character in his latest collection of poems. But Death had better not try to gatecrash Britain's John Masefield, who at 86 has plenty more to say and intends to say it. In London to accept.... a prize... the *poet laureate* allowed in a tense shout: 'I am still writing, and I hope to write better some day. At 86, some o fthe cobwebs have been knocked away, and the scene becomes grander!
(Time, Dec. 18, 64; p. 26, col. 3).

PLUS AND MINUS. These words are prepositions, meaning a) addition; positive; and b) diminished by, with the substraction of. They are also adjectives. They are widely used, as adjectives, colloquially in the senses of denoting a greater value than usual or a diminished value of a given mark.
"I got *A-plus* in History, *A-Minus* in English, *B-plus* in Maths, and *B-minus in* French."

POUND STERLING. Writes G. G. Coulton, in Medieval Panorama:
"In the Late Middle Ages, Flanders and the North German Hansa – the great confederation of cities around the Baltic –, were of most importance for English trade. The great corporation had its depots, with extraterritorial privileges, in many great towns: smaller factories in Lynn, Boston, York, Bristol, Ipswich, Nowwich, Yarmouth and Hull".
These merchants were called *easterlings* by the English, i.e. people of the East, and 'easterling money' was highly prized at a time when the kings constantly devalued their coin. The memory of the splendid qualities of the Hansa coin survives in the expressions *pound stirling*, and in 'a man of stirling worth', that is 'solid, trustworthy'.
"British interest in the source of this flood of meat elicited such tales of unlimited grazing and profits that millions of *pounds stirling* crossed the ocean for investment in western ranches in Canada, as well as in the States".
(J. C. Furnas: The Americans – a Social History of the United States 1587-1914, p. 686).

PRIMEVAL. e.g. swamp p...; forest p...
"Parts of Queens (New York) are today as free of people and as calmly frequented by herons and egrets as the *swamp primeval* in the Florida Everglades".
(National Geographic, July, 1964, p. 55).
"The years had made a lot of difference in what had been farming country and tame woods back in my hunting days.
Now it had the look of the *forest primeval*".
(S. & F. Fiction, July, 1967, p. 37).

PRINCE REGENT. 1) acting in the place of a king or ruler;
2) (now rare): acting as ruler; ruling.
"As was his invariable habit, Admiral Gonnohyoe Yamamoto arose at 4.30 that Saturday morning of September 1, 1923. He faced a taxing day, for Hirohito, the *Prince Regent* of Japan, had asked him to form a new government".

(Reader's Digest, March, 1964; p. 223, col. 1).

PRINCE ROYAL – the PRINCESS ROYAL The eldest son and eldest daughter of the sovereign.

"It has been customary to confer on the eldest daughter of the Sovereign for life style of *Princess Royal*".

(Br. Inf. Services: The Monarchy in Britain, p. 4).

PRONE. Adj.: having a propensity or inclination, a natural bent. prone to error: *error-prone;* prone to riot: *riot-prone;* prone to accidents: *accident-prone,* etc.

"In some *riot-prone* countries. U. S. ambassadors often ask for Checker limousines, since they are steel-lined throughout".

(Time, Dec. 18, 64; p. 16, col. 1).

The country is *youth-prone* the way some people are *accident-prone.*

(Time, Nov. 17, 75; p. 47, col. 1).

PROOF POSITIVE. The noun 'proof' may be preceded by the adjective *positive.* The postposition of the adjective, in this case merely adds elegance to the expression; it does not change its meaning.

"As *proof positive* of its independence, almost every new African nation has made a show of changing many of the place names imposed by its former colonial masters".

(Time, Jan. 24 72; p. 7, col. 1).

"(His) New Economic Policy . . . seems to me to be *proof positive* that his first term in office is being designed to prove . . . that he deserves a second term".

(Time, Sept. 6, 71; p. 1, col. 1)

"So this year the hand-cranked freezer in the wood tub goes into all Sears stores, *proof positive* that nostalgia is abroad in the land".

(Reader's Digest, June, 1966; p. 103, col. 2)

PROOF is also an ADJECTIVE, meaning: 1) of tested and proved strength; 2) impervious or invulnerable to; 3) used in proving or testing; 4) of standard strength: said of alcoholic liquors.

Examples of –PROOF as a combining form: impervious to *(waterproof);* protected from or against *(foolproof, rustproof)* ;as strong as *(armourproof);* resistant to, unaffected by *(fireproof).*

PROPER. The adjective *proper,* among other meanings, has that of 'understood in its restricted sense; strictly so called; genuine'. In this sense it generally follows the noun modified. We speak of *architecture proper; the* population of *Santiago proper* (i.e. apart from its suburbs) ; a *work of art proper.*

"The *motorcade proper* was led by a police car whose passengers included the Secret Service man stationed in San Antonio and the Washington agent who had advanced the city".

QUEEN: *queen dowager; queen mother; queen regnant.*

a) QUEEN DOWAGER. English law. Dowager: a widow enjoying some property, esp. a title, coming from her deceased husband. A *Queen dowager* is the widow of a king.

b) QUEEN REGNANT. A reigning queen. who is mother of the reigning king or queen. (Notice that although 'mother'is a noun, it is here used as an adjective; see, e.g., the 'mother lode' (area where an ore deposit is richest).

c) QUEEN REGNANT. A reigning queen.

"A Queen Regnant touches the Spurs with her hand".

(Br. Inf. Services: The Monarchy in Britain, p. 32)

RAMPANT: See 'Heraldry'; metaphorical use in 'knight rampant'. The term is used with a different meaning in the following example, with the meaning of 'uncontrollable in action,

manner, speech: "To Linda Ronstadt, the Plaza was just one more stop on the road, but it provided a splendid scenic view of the *lady rocker rampant*".
(Linda is a Rock singer) (Time, Feb. 28, 77; p. 29, col. 1)

SOLDIERS THREE. *Soldiers three* and other stories, by Rudyard Kipling. In this case Kipling makes use of a postposition frequent in Old English (see p.l.: his *suna twegen*), in the case of quantitative adjectives.

SUM TOTAL.
"The *sum total* is so small that, if communications remained as they were in Queen Victoria's day, the result as an influence to bind together a vast commonwealth would be almost negligible".
(T. K. Derry: The United Kingdom, p. 79)
"Nixon's list of abuses was only a *sum total* of what had been going on for years".
(Time, Oct. 3, 77; p. 1, col. 3)

SUPREME: e.g.: ***sorcerer supreme;*** *surprise supreme; weapon supreme.*
"And again, magic proves itself a fickle ally! Again, the *sorcerer* ***supreme*** **is a joke!"**
(Doctor Strange: Beelzebub on Parade. Marvel Comics, July, 1976)
"My devotion to corporate interests brought me the *surprise supreme* of my oriental wanderings".
(Harry A. Franck: A Vagabond Journey Around the World, 1910)
"DDT became the *weapon supreme* against malaria"
(Reader's Digest, July, 1966)

THE plus ADJECTIVE follows proper names in such groups as William the Silent; Elizabeth the Second; George the Sixth.

THINGS: *things feminine; things Chinese; things British,* etc.
"A Buddhist priest, be it remembered, must ever keep aloof from *things feminine*".
(Harry A. Franck; A Vagabond Journey Around the World).
"One of the most visible repercussions of Richard Nixon's China trip has been a sudden American appetite for *things Chinese*".
(Time, March 13, 72; p. 14, col. 1)
"Moreover, Collin's and Lapierre's uncritical admiration for *things British* creates the impression that colonialists were innocent victims, rather than co-authors, of India's ceaseless agonies.".
(Time, Oct. 27, 75; p. 58, col. 1)

TIME: for the time *being; time immemorial; times past.*

a) FOR THE TIME BEING: for the present; temporarily.
"I'm sorry, "she said". "It doesn't matter", he said.
And for the *time being,* and as far into the future as he was able to see in that awful moment, it did not matter.
(Allen Drury: Come Niniveh, Come Tyre)

b) TIME IMMEMORIAL. 1) time so long past as to be vague; 2) English Law: time bayond legal memory, fixed by status as prior to 1189, the beginning of the reign of Richard I.
"One group, though hardly in a position to complain, is the Mexican wetbacks who, since *time immemorial,* have used the beach past the Nixon compound as an invasion route".
(Time, Sept. 7, 70; p. 16, col. 1)
"Not far ahead looms the 'hungry season', an annual visitation which since *time immemorial* has been accepted as the inescapable lot of every Gambian".
(Elspeth Huxley: Four Guineas).

c) TIMES PAST. "It is a legend . . . espoused in *times past* by such luminaries as Walter Lippmann and Richard Nixon".
(Time, May 13, 74; p. 2, col. 2)

VICAR: *vicar apostolic; vicar forane; vicar general.*

a) VICAR APOSTOLIC; pl. VICARS APOSTOLIC. Roman Catholic Church:
1) formerly, a bishop or archbishop to whom the Pope delegated part of his jurisdiction; 2) a titular bishop administering a vacant diocese, or a missionary bishop acting as a delegate of the Holy See in a region where no regular see has yet been organized.

b) VICAR FORANE. Roman Catholic Church: same as Dean (sense 1.b) a priest chosen by his bishop to supervise a number of parishes within the diocese.
c) VICAR GENERAL, pl. VICARS GENERAL.
1) Anglican Church: a layman serving as administrative deputy to an archbishop or bishop;
2) Roman Catholic Church: a priest acting as administrative deputy to a bishop or to the general superior of a religious order, society, etc.

WINE ENOUGH (time ,money, honey, oil, air, petrol .... enough)
"There is *time enough* and there is *money enough,* and *there is wine enough,* So don't worry".
'Enough' may go before or after the noun, and the difference is mainly one of style.

FOOTNOTE ON NUMERALS:
Postposition is regular in Modern English in the case of cardinal numerals used as ordinals. We say 'Chapter one; chapter five (but: the first chapter; the fifth chapter) ; line thirteen, paragraph six, page three.

Conclusions

I. *Position*

1. The normal position of the adjective in Modern English is before the noun it qualifies. There are, however, numerous exceptions which lend more flexibiity to the language.
2. In some cases the postposition is obligatory: — *designate; elect; galore; aplenty; something blue; time being.*
3. Some adjectives suffer a change in meaning when they are placed in a postoposition: an *'ambassador extraordinary'* is not the same as an *'extraordinary ambassador'; 'sum total' is* not the same as *'total sum'.*
4. In some cases there is little or no change in meaning: *'positive proof'* or *'proof positive'.*
5. The postposition is widely used in Heraldry and in Poetry.
6. Many cases appear in the field of Law, clear survivals of Anglo-Norman French: *fee simple; fee tail; malice propense; body politic; lords appellant; issue male.*
7. Postposition is common in matters dealing with royalty or nobility: *blood royal; barons palatine; lords spiritual.*
8. Some terms are taken over bodily from French: *bête noire.*
9. There are cases of whimsical creation: *the form divine.*
10. Cardinal numerals used as ordinals follow the noun: *chapter fifteen; page four; paragraph two; line ten.*
11. In the case of more than one adjective there is a tendency towards the postposition: *a girl young, tender and cheerful.*
12. In innumerable cases the postposition indicates a reduced relative clause: *the stars (which are) visible* at night.

The general conclusion is that most cases of postposition of the adjective in Modern English are a leftover from the bodily incorporation of Norman French into English, from the times of William the Conqueror (1066 A.D.) until the death of Chaucer in 1440.

II. *Inflection*

1. The adjective in Modern English is invariable. There are, however some exceptions.
2. Demonstrative adjectives have a singular and a plural form.
3. There are some cases in which the adjective takes a plural, cases which are a leftover from earlier times, as exemplified by Shakespeare's use of *letters-patents* and *lords-appellants.*
4. We speak of *courts-martial;* however, in the case of 'trials by a court-martial' there is a tendency to say *court-martials.*
5. *Knight Templar* has two plurals: a) in the case of members of the Order: *Knights Templars;* b) in the case of members of a certain Order of Freemasons: *Knights Templars.*
6. There are several cases in which the adjective may or may not take an *s* in the plural: e.g.

attorneys general	or	attorney generals
consuls general	or	consul generals
governors general	or	governor generals
Knights Bachelor	or	Knights Bachelors
notaries public	or	notary publics
poets laureate	or	poet laureates
postmasters general	or	postmaster generals
solicitors general	or	solicitor generals

CORPUS

alert General
anything German
ambassador plenipotentiary
aplenty
Astronomer Royal
barons palatine
bar (bend) sinister
battle royal
Beluga gray
bête noire
billet-doux
blood royal
body beautiful
body corporate
body politic
bone (dry, idle, weary)
church militant
crystal clear
court-martial
— designate
  premier designate;
  Secretary of State-designate:
  successor-designate
— elect
  President-elect;
  Vice President-elect;
  governor-elect
  senator-elect
  mayor-elect
  spark-elect
enough
extraordinary
deskman ex.;
musician ex.;
pursuivant ex.;
ambassador ex.;
diplomat extraordinaire
fee simple
fee tail
form divine
galore
general
attorney-general
auditor-general
clothier-general
comptroller-general
consul-general
director-general
governor-general
inspector-general
paymaster-general
postmaster-general

under secretary-general
solicitor-general
surgeon-general
states-general
vicar-general
God Almighty!
God omnipotent
heir
apparent; designate; general male; female; presumptive
Heraldry (diverse examples)
joy unrestrained
knight
bachelor; errant; rampant; Templar
Lady Bountiful
last
letters
patent; credential; testamentary
lords
appellant; ordinary; temporal; spiritual
major
malice aforethought (or propense)
matters aesthetic; gastronomic
(musical terms); major; minor; flat; sharp
painter laureate
poet laureate
plus and minus
pound sterling
prince regent
prince, princess royal
– prone
proof positive
– proof
proper
queen dowager; mother; regnant
soldiers three
sum total
supreme (sorcerer; surprise; weapon)
swamp primeval
THE plus adjective
things feminine; Chinese; British
time being (for the)
time immemorial
time past
vicar apostolic; forane; general
wine (time, money, oil) enough

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