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The reflexes of OE *beon* as a marker of futurity in early Middle English

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In Old English the finite forms of the *b*-root for ‘be’ (*beo*, *bist*, *bið,* etc.) were more likely to appear in contexts involving futurity than the *s*-root (*eom*, *eart*, *is*, etc). The use of the *b*-root for future continues into Middle English. During the compilation of *LAEME*, we have observed that the complex and variable Old English distinction can become simplified and systematized. In early Middle English the use of *b*-forms in the present indicative singular is in some text languages[1] restricted entirely to future senses. In the areas where the *b*-root is the norm for present indicative plural, this system is confined to the singular. But in the North and to a certain extent the North Midlands, where *ar-*/*er*-forms are available, the system is extended into the plural. Ilse Wischer’s contribution to this volume offers fascinating and detailed insights into the different forms of the verb ‘to be’ in Old English and their distinctive functions. This paper looks mainly at subsequent developments. It therefore only briefly summarizes the Old English distinctions as background to a micro-dialectal study of three subsystems that emerge during early Middle English. Their identification gives rise to further questions that might reward investigation in the future.

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[*] These observations arise from work on early Middle English manuscript texts undertaken at the Institute for Historical Dialectology, Linguistics and English Language, School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences, University of Edinburgh towards the compilation of *A Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English* (*LAEME*). This research project was supported from 2000-2006 by AHRC for which gratitude is here expressed. I also thank Roger Lass, Keith Williamson, the anonymous reviewers and the volume editors for very helpful comments on earlier drafts.

[1] The term “text language” is adopted from Suzanne Fleischman (2000: 34), who used it to refer in general to historical languages for which our only informants are written texts. In this paper the term is used as it is in Laing & Lass (2008: see esp. Introduction, Chapter 1) as the surviving written English of some particular scribe. A text language may represent the written dialect of the scribe who perpetuates it; or (in the case of a *literatim* copyist), that of the exemplar from which he copies. In the first case, a single text language can comprise the usage of any number of surviving texts, either composed by a particular scribe, or translated by him

1. Background

1.1. Futurity in Old English

As in Present-Day English, morphological tense markers in Old English are confined to past and present (or non-past). Temporal relations may be signed more fully by context and/or by temporal adverbs and conjunctions. Present (or non-past) can also express the future:

(1) & ic arise of deaðe on þam þriddan dæge
and I will-arise from death on the third day
(quoted from Traugott 1992: 180-182)

The verb *to be* appears to be at least a partial exception to this rule. It is one of the so-called "anomalous verbs" in Old English, being both irregular and defective. Its full conjugation in English (from Old English to Present-Day English) is made up from a union of the surviving forms of three originally distinct and independent verbs:

a. the *s*-root, i.e. the original IE substantive verb with stem **h$_1$es-*, Skr. *as-*, *'s-*, Gr. *εσ-*, L. *es-*, *'s-*, PGmc. **es-, *'s-*. This has no surviving past tense in Indo-European languages.
b. the *b*-root, i.e. IE **bheu-* Skr. *bhu-*, *bhaw-*, Gr. *φυ-*, L. *fu-*, PGmc. **βeu-*, **βeo-*, OE *bēon* 'to become, come to be'. This also has no surviving past tense.
c. the *w*-root, i.e. the verb with stem **wes-*, Skr. *vas-* 'to remain', PGmc. **wes-* Gothic *wis-an* 'to remain, stay, continue to be', OS, OE, OHG *wesan*, OFris. *wes-a*, ON *ver-a*. This provides the past tense in English. Other parts of *wesan* fell out of use during the Old English period when it was a defective strong verb of Class V, subject to Verner's Law: ind. sg. 1st and 3rd *wæs*, 2nd *wæxre*, pl. *wæxron*, subj. *wæxre(n)* (Campbell 1959: §768).

Only roots (a) and (b) are relevant to the present discussion.

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from an exemplar or exemplars whose language he translates into his own dialect. In the second case, a single *literatim* copyist may provide us with more than one text language. A text language may be homogeneous dialectally or mixed.

1.2 The OE *bēon* paradigm
(Taken from Campbell 1959: §768 (d))

the *s*- root	the *b*- root
Indicative	
Present	
Sg. 1 eom *I am*	bēo *I shall be*[2]
2 eart	bist
3 is	biþ
Pl. sindon, sint	bēoþ
[Anglian erun, arun]	
Subjunctive	
Present	
Sg. sīe	bēo
Pl. sīen	bēon
Imperative	
Sg.	bēo[3]
Pl.	bēoþ
Infinitive	
	bēon

The present forms of *weorþan* are also sometimes used in Old English and in early Middle English to express the future.[4] The verb *weorþan* is not discussed in this paper, but a more detailed study of futurity in Old and early Middle English would certainly need to take account of it.[5]

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[2] These are Campbell's glosses. See further the quotation from Mitchell (1985) in §1.3 below, qualifying the implication that there was a clear-cut present/future distinction.

[3] Wischer (this volume) also lists the rare *s*-root and *w*-root imperatives *sie* and *wes, wesaþ.*

[4] *Weorþan* is a strong verb of Class III, which also has the senses 'become, happen'. It is also used, in combination with forms of *wesan,* to provide the passive voice.

[5] Cf. e.g. *Hwa wæs æfre, oþþe is nu, oððe hwa wyrþ get æfter us* 'Who always was, or is now, or who shall be yet after us' (Ælfred's translation of Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy* 11.I.) and *Ich shal mid one bare porde Do þat þi speche prht forporþe* 'I shall with one single word make it that thy speech shall be destroyed' (London, British Library, Cotton Caligula A ix, *The Owl and the Nightingale* lines 547–48, Language 1, Worcs, C13b2).

1.3 OE *beon* and the expression of futurity

In Old English the finite forms of the *b*-root for 'be' were more likely to appear in contexts involving futurity than the *s*-root e.g. *eom*, *is*. Mitchell (1985:§659ff) notes considerable semantic complexity, but essentially follows Campbell's (1959:§768) conclusions:[6]

> [...] *bēo* expresses what is (*a*) an invariable fact, e.g. *ne bið swylc cwenlic þeaw* 'such is not a queenly custom', or (*b*) the future, e.g. *ne bið þe wilna gad* 'you will have no lack of pleasures', or (*c*) iterative extension into the future, e.g. *biþ storma gehwylc aswefed* 'every storm is always allayed' [...]; *eom* expresses a present state provided its continuance is not especially regarded, e.g. *wlitig is se wong* 'the plain is beautiful'.[7]

1.4 The grammarian's view

Amongst his numerous other works in English, the great homilist and hagiographer Ælfric of Eynsham also produced a *Grammar*. It is a grammar of the Latin language, and is rich in Latin examples, but the text itself is couched in Ælfric's late-tenth-century West-Saxon English. This work appears to have had considerable contemporary popularity, since it still survives in ten Old English manuscripts (often accompanied by Ælfric's Latin-English *Glossary*). There are also a number of fragments of the text surviving in other manuscripts, as well as some later copies.[8] It is clearly of great interest for our perception of the "future tense" in Old English to see how its expression was understood by a contemporary grammarian. Ælfric's examples indicate that the simple future in Latin is expressed in Old English by present indicative forms, with or without adverbial support, e.g. *to merjen* 'tomorrow' (quoted from Zupitza 1880 [2001]: 131):

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[6] Cf. a similar summary in Traugott (1992: 182-183). Traugott follows Mustanoja (1960: 583; cf. Jost 1909) in using *wesan* (non-historically) as the citation form for the *s*-root as well as the *w*-root.

[7] These basic handbook summaries are perhaps sufficient to provide the background for the present study of early Middle English data. There has been a great deal of more recent work on the double paradigm for 'be' in Old English. See for instance Kilpiö (1992, 1993, 1997). Kilpiö (1997: 89) observes the general tendency for *b*-forms rather than *s*-forms to be used with the future, and that "conversely, deictic locatives or temporals linking the state or action to the present moment or situation are more common with non-*b*-forms than *b*-forms". For a convincing account of 'the Celtic hypothesis', that the double paradigm and its contrasting functions is the result of sub-stratal Celtic influence on Old English, see Lutz (2008) and works there cited. Cf. Wischer (this volume), who also offers a syntactic and dialectal survey.

[8] For details of all the manuscript copies see Zupitza (1880[2001]: iv-ix) and references there to Ker (1957).

(2) *futuro tempore* on toweardre tide *amabo* ic lufige gyt to dæg oððe to merjen, *amabis* þu lufast, *amabit* he lufað ET PLURALITER *amabimus* we lufjað, *amabitis* ge lufjað, *amabunt* hi lufjað.
'*futuro tempore* in future tense *amabo* "I love yet today or tomorrow", *amabis* "thou lovest", *amabit* "he loveth"; and in the plural *amabimus* "we love", *amabitis* "ye love", *amabunt* "they love".'

1.5 Old English forms of the verb *to be* as a marker of futurity

For the verb *to be*, we find in Ælfric's *Grammar* clear illustration of the relationships of the *s*-root and the *b*-root to the expression of futurity in Old English under the section headed *De Verbo Passivo* ('Concerning tshe Passive Verb'). Compare the *s*-root usage (3) with the *b*-root usage (4), where adverbial support is nevertheless still supplied (quoted from Zupitza 1880 [2001]: 139-140):

(3) AMOR ic eom gelufod ys PASSIVVUM, swa swa we ær cwædon, *amaris* þu eart gelufod, *amatur* he ys gelufod; ET PLURALITER *amamur* we synt gelufode, *amamini* ge synd, *amantur* hi synd.
'AMOR "I am loved" is passive as we said before, *amaris* "thou art loved", *amatur* "he is loved"; and in the plural *amamur* "we are loved", *amamini* "ye are", *amantur* "they are".'

(4) TEMPORE FVTVRO *amabor* ic beo gelufod gyt, *amaberis* ðu bist, *amabitur* he byð; ET PLURALITER *amabimur* we beoð gelufode gyt, *amabimini* ge beoð, *amabuntur* hi beoð gelufode.
'in future tense *amabor* "I [shall] be loved yet", *amaberis* "thou [shall] be", *amabitur* "he [shall] be"; and in the plural *amabimur* "we [shall] be loved yet", *amabimini* "ye [shall] be", *amabuntur* "they [shall] be loved".'[9]

2. Late Middle English

2.1 Survival of 'be' as a marker of futurity

Mustanoja (1960: 583) summarizes the Old English division between the use of the *s*-root[10] and the *b*-root, and further observes: "Traces of this old use of the

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[9] In these glosses I use *shall* throughout the paradigm to express simple future, as was most commonly the practice in late Middle English with all verbs, and also in early Middle English with verbs other than *be*. No deontic sense is here implied. The practice of using *shall* in the first person and *will* in second and third persons to imply simple future, with the reverse usage in each case implying obligation, is a tradition that emerged later in the history of English. In Scots, the future versus deontic paradigms of *shall* and *will* are commonly the reverse of those in Standard English.

[10] Which he refers to as *wesan*, cf. note 6 above.

b-forms to express futurity occur in early ME and to some extent even later in the period" (cf. also Fischer 1992: 241).

2.2 Late Middle English grammars

Ælfric's *Grammar* was designed to explain the morphology and syntax of Latin by means of examples translated into Old English. Unfortunately, we have nothing of this kind for early Middle English. Post 1066, until the late fourteenth century, French and not English was the medium of instruction in the schools:

'After the Norman Conquest, English fell out of use as the language of elementary instruction in Latin grammar, and no grammatical texts in Middle English survive from before the closing years of the fourteenth century. Ranulf Higden, who died c. 1363, was still able to complain in his *Polychronicon* that "pueri in scholis contra morem caeterarum nationum a primo Normannorum adventu, derelicto proprio vulgari, construere Gallice compelluntur." ['Since the first arrival of the Normans, contrary to the custom of other nations, boys in schools are obliged to abandon their own language and to construe in French.'] [(Thomson 1984: xi)'.]

As we know from John Trevisa's interpolation into his translation of Higden's *Polychronicon*, by 1385 (the time Trevisa was writing): "in al þe gramerscoles of Engelond childern leueþ Frensch and construeþ and lurneþ an Englysch" (quoted from Sisam 1970: 149). Once English began again to be used as the language of instruction and of the construal of Latin in schools, Latin grammars couched in English also started to reappear. Compared with Ælfric's splendidly full treatment, the Middle English grammatical texts that emerged in the late fourteenth and fifteenth century (Thomson 1984) are very slight, and tend to be hardly more than checklists. Those that deal fully with the verbal conjugations agree that Latin simple future tense is expressed in English by the periphrastic use of *shall*: e.g. "Qwerby knowyst þe future tens? For it spekyth of tyme þat is to come, and hath þis Englysch wurd 'schal', as *amabo* 'I schal louyn'" (Thomson 1984: 26 – *Acedence* text C line 429–31, from Cambridge, St. John's College, MS F. 26 (163), fols. 1r–12r). There is rarely mention in these grammars of *esse*, *sum* or the other anomalous verbs in Latin, and therefore no Middle English examples useful for our present discussion on the forms of the verb *to be* are given.

How, then, was the simple future expressed in English between these two periods for which we have evidence from contemporary grammarians, and how are we to interpret the early Middle English evidence for the forms of the verb *to be*?

3. Early Middle English

3.1 The grammarian's view

Although there are no new grammars in Middle English much before 1400, the early Middle English Tremulous Scribe of Worcester made a copy of Ælfric's *Grammar* in the early thirteenth century (Worcester Cathedral, Chapter Library F 174, fols. 1r–63r). He updated the spellings of the English parts of the text, including the exemplary material, to those of his own thirteenth-century Worcestershire language. He often curtailed the English examples where there was deducible repetition, and also truncated the Latin, giving just the endings when the repeated root could be inferred. The passages from Ælfric quoted in (2) to (4) above appear in the Tremulous Scribe's version as (5) to (7) below (transcribed from a microfilm of the manuscript):

(5) futuro te*m*pore . amabo . ic lufie ȝet to-dai . oþer tomorƿen \ amabis . amabit . & pl*uralite*r amabim*us* bitis . bu*n*t
(6) [A]mor . ic am ilufod is passiuu*m* so ƿe ær cƿeþon . amaris . þu ert ilufod . amat*ur* . he is ilufod . & pl*uralite*r amam*ur* . ƿe beoþ ilufod . amamini . amant*ur* .
(7) te*m*pore . fut*ur*o amabor ic beo ilufed ȝet . amaberis . þu bist amabit*ur* he biþ . & pl*uralite*r amabim*ur* ƿe beoþ amabimini . amabunt*ur* .

It can be seen that the Tremulous Scribe copied the structure of Ælfric's English with minimal formal updating. Did he make his copy of the *Grammar* only from antiquarian interest, or did the content still hold for thirteenth-century English usage?

3.2 *A Linguistic Atlas of Early Middle English (LAEME)*

The evidence from the *LAEME* corpus of tagged texts (CTT) is that the Old English practice of using the *s*-root for "a present state" and the *b*-root for (among other things) futurity continues in at least some dialects of early Middle English. Of the 167 text languages in the CTT, 49 show at least some examples of *be*-future. The process of tagging itself turned out to be a powerful heuristic.

3.2.1 *Tagging of 'be' with future sense*

Consider the following from the version of *Ancrene Riwle* in Cambridge, Gonville and Caius 234/120:

(8) O þen an half adomesdai **shulen** ure sparte sunnen
On the one side on doomsday **shall** our black sins

strongliche **biclepien** us of ure saple murþre. O þer oþer
strongly **accuse** us of our soul's murder. On the other

half stont rich-pisnesse þe nan repþe is pid. dredful &
side stands righteousness whom no mercy is with, dreadful &

grislich. & grure-ful to bi-holden. Buuen us þe orre deme.
grisly & gruesome to behold. Above us the angry judge.

for ase softe as he **is her**; ase hard he **bid þer**. Ase
For as soft as he **is here**, as hard he **shall be there**; as

milde ase he is nu; ase sturne þenne. Lomb her; leon þar
mild as he is now, as stern then; lamb here, lion there.

The *Ancrene Riwle*[11] was probably written in the first quarter of the thirteenth century (C13a1) in South Salop or North Herefords. The Gonville and Caius manuscript (G) dates from the third quarter of the century (C13b1) and belongs in N Worcs. It follows closely the structure of the original here as attested by a combination of the Cleopatra text (C) and the author's revised version represented by the Corpus text (A). The Nero (N) and Titus (T) versions are also similar. All four of these copies probably date from C13a2. The example above is a paraphrase and expansion of the first part of a Latin quotation from "seint Anselme" which immediately precedes it in the text: *Hinc erunt peccata accusancia . Illinc terrens iusticia sup*ra *iratus Iudex* ('On this side shall be the accusing sins. On the other side [shall be] terrifying justice. Above us the angry judge.'). The English version freely adapts the Latin, but it does show a strict response to the Latin tense structure. The overtly expressed simple future *erunt* 'shall be' combined with present participle *accusancia* 'accusing' is here expressed with periphrastic *shall* plus infinitive: *shulen biclepien* 'shall accuse'. The Latin parallel construction has present participle *terrens* 'terrifying' presumably with *erit* 'shall be' understood. Here the Middle English does not supply the necessary future *shal* form that would create strict parallelism. Instead the Latin is paraphrased, the missing finite verb and the present participle *terrens* being rendered respectively by two present indicatives: *stont rich-pisnesse þe nan repþe is pid* 'stands righteousness whom no mercy is with'. *Stont* here could be taken as present indicative implying future tense, or possibly as a state that exists at the moment of writing, while *is* expresses a general truth. With the next two instances of the verb *to be* (for which corresponding Latin is lacking) there is a contrast between present indicative expressing a state that exists at the moment of writing: *is her* 'is here' and what is, judging from the context, a clear expression of future time: *bid þer* 'shall be there'. The A, C and N texts (all like G from the South-West Midland area) have the same syntactic structure as G, contrasting *is* and *bið*, but the N text also repeats *bið* before 'then' reinforcing the distinction between 'is now' and 'shall be then'. The T text, which belongs further north, in Cheshire, preserves the distinction between the *s*-root and *b*-root but has the northerly form *beos* rather than the *bid/bið* of the other texts.

The sample from the G version of *Ancrene Riwle* used in the CTT was tagged for *LAEME* following our usual tagging procedures (*LAEME*, Introduction, Chapter 4). Parts of the above example are illustrated below, (a) in the tagged text format and (b) in the format (including tags) that is retrievable using the concordancing programme on the *LAEME TASKS* page.

(a) Tagged text format

```
$for/cj_FOR
$as/av>=_ASE
$soft/aj_SOFTE
$as/av_AS
$/P13NM_HE
$be/vps13_IS
$here/av_HER
{.'}
$so/cj<=_ASE
$hard/aj_HARD
{\}
$/P13NM_HE
$be/v-fut13_BID
$there/av_yER
```

(b) Concordance format[12]

```
as/av>=soft/aj   as/av /P13NM  be/vps13  here/av }
ASE     SOFTE  AS    HE        IS        HER

so/cj<= hard/aj  /P13NM
ASE     HARD   HE

BID [be/v-fut13 (C13b1) # 276 caiusart.tag]

there/av  as/av>=  mild/aj  as/av  /P13NM
yER  *ASE          MILDE  ASE  HE

be/vps13 now/av }  so/cj<=  stern/aj
IS          NU       ASE      STURNE
```

From these illustrations it can be seen that the tags assigned to the finite verb forms *is* and *bid* from our short example are different: $be/vps13 and $be/v-fut13. The beginning of a tag is signalled by $. The lexical element (lexel) appears between $ and / and is here the modern English citation form *be*. The grammatical element (grammel) comes between / and _ after which follows the manuscript form, here illustrated in "internal format" in capitals, viz IS and BID. The grammel for IS is vps13: v = verb; ps = present indicative; 1 = singular; 3 = third person. The grammel for BID substitutes -fut for ps. The -fut tag label is used only for forms of the verb *to be* and I have tried to confine it to examples where clear future is intended; though the dividing line between this and Campbell's (see §1.2 above) "iterative extension into the future" is fuzzy. Often cases could be argued either way, though sometimes there are rather strong clues when Latin exempla in a text are (more or less) translated into Middle English, as in this example from the same text as above:

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[11] The surviving early Middle English versions are found in Cambridge, Corpus Christi College 402 (A), London, British Library, Cotton Cleopatra C vi (C), London, British Library, Cotton Nero A xiv (N), London, British Library, Cotton Titus D xviii (T), and Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College 234/120 (G). The passage illustrated here does not form part of the tagged sample in the *LAEME* CTT for any of the texts except G.

[12] To save space, examples from now on will be given in "normal" rather than internal *LAEME* format, and without the tagging being included.

(9) Quid *con*fusionis. q*ui*d ignominie **erit** q*ua*ndo dissipatis
What of confusion, what of ignominy **shall be** when, scattered

foliis & disp*er*sis. Vniu*er*sa **nudabit*ur*** turpitude
leaves and dispersed, all **shall be laid bare** foulness

sanies **apparebit**. hƿuch schendlac. & hƿuch sorhe
filth **shall appear**. what ignominy and what sorrow

bið þer hƿenne alle þe leaues **schulen beon** toƿarpled.
shall be there when all the leaves **shall be** scattered,

& al þat fulþe schaƿen him & **ƿringed**
and all that filth [shall] show itself and **wrings/shall wring**

ut þat ƿursum biuoren alle ƿide ƿorld
out that corruption before all [the] wide world

Here the singular *bið* directly translates Latin *erit* 'shall be'. Thereafter, the Middle English paraphrases the Latin text. The Latin ablative absolute *dissipatis foliis et dispersis* 'the leaves having been scattered' and singular future tense *nudabitur* and *apparebit* ('shall be laid bare' and 'shall appear') are combined in the Middle English periphrastic expression in the plural, *schulen beon* plus a past participle *toƿarpled* 'shall be scattered', followed by an infinitive *schaƿen* 'show itself'.[13] The text then continues with an expansion, for which there is no equivalent Latin text, with a present tense *ƿringed ut* 'wrings/shall wring [itself] out'.[14] In this text

language there is no distinctive simple verbal form available to differentiate present from future sense of 'be' in the plural, *b*-root *beoð*-type spellings being the norm for the present plural indicative 'are'. Using periphrastic *schulen beon* was therefore the only way for the scribe to translate the Latin simple future with an English equivalent that was distinctively future in expression.

3.2.2 Shall *as a marker of tense or of obligation?*

By the early Middle English period *shall* has begun to emerge as a regular marker for the expression of futurity (Fischer 1992: 241, 250), especially with verbs other than *to be*, because for those verbs there is no formal distinction available. However, alongside this emergent function for future expression, *shall* in the present tense can still be used deontically in Middle English, in general statements of what is right or becoming, to mean 'ought, should'. Sometimes therefore the use of *shall* can be ambiguous. Consider the following example from British Library, Egerton 613, *Poema Morale* (e text - C13a2-b1):

(10) Ac drihte ne demð nanne man æfter his
But the Lord not judges no man according to his

bi-ginni*ng* ac al his lif **sceal beo** sich se **buð** his endinge
beginning, but all his life **shall/must be** such as **is/shall be** his ending

When tagging, we have to decide whether the periphrastic expression *sceal beo* implies merely futurity (future 'shall') or whether *sceal* here retains at least some of the sense of obligation it had in Old English (deontic 'shall'). If *sceal* here represents future 'shall', we would have to supply an underlying 'judged' to make sense of the expression: a man's life will be judged not according to how he begins it but according to how he ends it. If *sceal beo* implied future sense only, this might suggest that the finite simplex *buð* was not normally used for this purpose in this text language, and that its appearance in the second clause should be tagged as present indicative: $be/vps13 meaning 'is'. If *buð* were taken to be a possible variant for the temporal expression of 'shall be' and tagged $be/v-fut13, it would imply in the writer a conscious avoidance of a strictly parallel expression of what would appear to be parallel (though inverted) senses: 'his life shall be' and 'shall be his ending'. Of course the demands of metre have to be taken into account as well: it may be that the periphrastic variant was chosen merely to fill up the line. That aside, if we take *sceal beo* here to represent deontic 'shall be', both the semantic context and its formal contrast suggests that *buð* may be analysed as implying future 'shall be'.

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[13] The G version (which is a much shortened and reordered text of *Ancrene Riwle*) differs here syntactically from the other early Middle English texts of *Ancrene Riwle*. This seems to be the only plausible interpretation of its syntax in this context. In G's language, *schaƿen* cannot be plural indicative (which is always expressed by the '–eth'-type ending). Formally it can only be infinitive or plural subjunctive. I take it to be infinitive depending on *schulen* in a zeugma construction.

[14] The A, C, N and T texts (after whatever form of *toƿarpled* they have) all proceed with a version of the structure: *& al ꝥ fulþe schaƿeð him . & ƿringeð ut ꝥ ƿursum biuoren alle þe ƿide ƿorld*. The T version has the NWML *-es* variants for 3sg pres ind: *scheaƿes* and *ƿringes*. The G version's *ƿringed* is clearly also intended to be 3sg pres ind. In this text language <d> and <ð> are frequently interchangeable: cf. *bid* for *bið* in example (8) and see further Lass & Laing (2009).

3.2.3 *The importance of comparison*

In practice of course we rarely have to treat such a short example in isolation. The text of the Egerton (e) version of *Poema Morale* ends imperfectly, but it still runs to 368 lines of verse. It is vital when making analytical decisions, whether for tagging or other purposes, to look at variant usages within and across text languages as *whole systems*. There are six other surviving copies of *Poema Morale*, originating from different parts of the country and dating from between the late twelfth century to about 1300. The two verse lines above and the two lines following are set out here from all seven versions for (admittedly limited) comparison, and also to illustrate some of the variation in use of *be* and *shall* in different places and at different times.

T = Cambridge, Trinity College B.14.52, fols. 2r–9v. C12b2. W Essex.
L = London, Lambeth Palace Library 487, fols. 59v–65r. ca 1200. NW Worcs.
D = Oxford, Bodleian Library, Digby 4, fols. 97r–110v. C13a1. W Kent.
e = London, British Library, Egerton 613, fols. 64r–70v. C13a2-b1. SW Worcs.
E = London, British Library, Egerton 613, fols. 7r–12v. C13a2-b1. SW Worcs.
J = Oxford, Jesus College 29, fols. 169r–174v. C13b2. E Herefords.
M = Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum, McClean 123, fols. 115r–120r. ca 1300. Gloucs.

(11)	T:	Ac	drihte	ne	demeð	noman	after	his	biginninge
	L:	Ah	drihten	ne	demeð	nenne .M.	eft*er*	his	biginnigge
	D:	Drihte		ne	demeð	nenne man.	bi	his	biginninge
	e:	Ac	drihte	ne	demð	nanne man	æfter	his	bi-ginni*ng*
	E:	Ac	drithte	ne	demeð	nanne man	after	his	bi-ginninge
	J:	Ne **schal** nomon **beon** ydemed.					after	his	bigynnynge.
	M:	Ac	crist	ne	demeþ	nanne man	after	his	ginnigge

(12)	T:	Ac al his lif	**sal**	**ben**	teald after	his	endinge
	L:	Ah al his lif	**scal**	**bon**	suilch **boð**	his	endinge
	D:	Al his lif	**sel**	**ben**	iteald bi	his	endinge
	e:	ac al his lif	**sceal**	**beo**	sich se **buð**	his	endinge
	E:	ac his lif	**scal**	**beo**	spulc se **bued**	his	endinge
	J:	Ah dom	**schal**	þolyen vych mon. after		his	endinge .
	M:	Ac al	**scal**	**beo**	his lif iteld suich **is**	his	endigge

(13)	T:	ᵹief	þe endinge	**is**	god	al	hit	**is**	god.	&	euel	ᵹief	euel	**is**	þe ende
	L:	ᵹef	ꝥ	**is**	uuel	al	hit	**is**	uuel.	&	God	ᵹefe	god	his	ende
	D:	Ef	se ende	**is**	euel		hit	**is**	al euel	&	god	ef	god	**is**	se ende
	e:	Ac	ᵹifþe ende	**is**	uuel	eal	hit	**is**	uuel.	&	gód	ᵹif	gód	**is**	þenne
	E:	Ac	ȝifþe ende	**is**	euel	al	it	**is**	uuel	&	al god	ȝif	god	**is**	ende
	J:	If	þe ende	**is**	vuel.	al	hit	**is**	vuel.		god	yef	vs		godende.
	M:	Ȝef	his ende	**is**	euel	al	hit	**is**	euel	&	god	ȝef	god	**beoþ**	his ende

(14)	T:	God	ᵹieue	þat	ure ende **be**	god & ᵹieue	þat	he us lende
	L:	God	ᵹeue	ꝥ	ure ende **bo**	god . & ƿite	ꝥ	he us lende
	D:	God	ᵹeue	ꝥ	ure ende **bi**	god . & ƿite	hƿet	he us lende
	e:	god	ᵹyue	ꝥ	ure ende **beo**	gód . & ƿit	þét	hé us lenne
	E:	god	ȝuue	þat	ure ende **beo**	god . & ƿite	þet	he us lende
	J:	God	yef	vs	vre ende	god . hwider	þat	he vs lende
	M:	Iesucrist leue		þat	ure ende **beo**	god & ƿitie	þat	he us lende

Apart from J, which has a free paraphrase very different from the rest, there are a few minor differences of lexis and word order between the texts that give minor differences also in sense. But it is clear from the examples in (13) (confirmed from examination of the text dictionaries derived from the complete *LAEME* samples for these text languages) that *is* is the normal form for the present indicative 3rd person singular 'is'. Confirming this gives us more licence to interpret the *b*-root forms in L, e and E as implying future. T, D and M illustrate a variant textual tradition, and have the past participle 'told, judged' that we supplied as understood for the e version above; they therefore lack the context for the *b*-root future form.

The M version, however, displays an interesting variation in its deployment of *s*-root and *b*-root forms. It has *is* where L, e and E have *b*-forms and *beoþ* for the third example of 'is' in (13). It looks as if in the M scribe's system the *s*-root and *b*-root forms are simply variants for 'is' and he could write either to represent what was probably *is* in his exemplar.[15] This variation would also mean that he could read exemplar *bið*-type forms as simple present indicative and substitute his *is* variant for them if he wished. Examination of his practice across the whole of his text confirms this: he uses *is*, *beoþ* and *beþ* for the 3rd singular present indicative where present sense is certainly implied, and there are no clear contexts in his output where *b*-forms must imply future sense. Clearly the v-fut13 tag cannot be sensibly applied to this scribe's forms for 'is'. The free paraphrase of the J scribe shows that he has opted to express the future with periphrastic 'shall', which here has no implication of obligation. Note too the survival in all seven texts of subjunctive *b(e)o*, *bi* for the optative expression 'grant that our end be good'.

3.2.4 *Classifying the variation*

During the tagging process there emerged three early Middle English *b*-root "systems" for expression of futurity. These systems are possible because of the availability of both *s*-root and *b*-root forms in the present tense. In early Middle English this is true for the singular in all dialects and also for the plural in non-southerly dialects.

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[15] The order of the lines of the *Poema Morale* in M differs greatly from that in the other versions. Paues (1907: 225) conjectures that M's text may therefore have been written down from memory. The point here holds whether or not the 'exemplar' was in front of the M scribe or in his head.

TYPE 1: Southerly mixed — the Old English system continued?

Text languages of this type show *s*-root spellings of the *am art is* type for the present indicative singular of 'be' and *b*-root spellings of the *be(o)þ* type for present indicative plural. Subjunctive is expressed by *be(o)* singular and *be(o)n* plural. *b*-root spellings are also found to express the future, more commonly in the singular (*biþ* type) than in the plural *be(o)þ* type. *Biþ*-type spellings may also be used in the singular for present tense without future sense. More work would be needed to look at the contexts of *b*-root spellings that do not imply futurity to see if they are all or mostly of the "general truth" type that could imply a continuation of the Old English system.

The following examples are from London, Lambeth Palace Library 487, Lambeth Homilies, language 1 (ca 1200, North-West Worcestershire). Compare the following similar constructions:

(15) ᵹif þet eᵹe **ablindað** ne **bið** naut þe hond ƿel lokinde
If the eye **becomes blind** the hand **shall not be** well-seeing

(16) Gif god **bið** his ifulsta ne **bið** his mehte nowher forseᵹen
If God **is/shall be** his helper his might nowhere **shall be** despised

The first example illustrates a present single occurrence followed by a future occurrence and is expressed by the 3rd person singular indicative *ablindað* followed by a *b*-root form of 'be' to express future. The second example has *bið* in both halves of the expression. The second *bið* is used, as in the first example, to express a future occurrence. The first *bið* may be interpreted as an invariable fact or as an example of the present continuous or as implying future. Any of these interpretations would show a continuation of Old English usage.

TYPE 2: Southerly discrete

Text languages of this type show *s*-root spellings of the *am art is* type for the present indicative singular of 'be' and *b*-root spellings of the *be(o)þ* type for present indicative plural. Subjunctive is expressed by *be(o)* singular and *be(o)n* plural. This leaves the singular *be, bist, biþ* type spellings "free" to express future sense. If *be(o)þ* types are used to express the future in the plural they are formally indistinguishable from the present forms, making the system defective. Recourse may then be had to 'shall' periphrasis as in the G *Ancrene Riwle* example in section 3.2.1 above. The illustrations of the Southerly discrete system below are from Oxford, Bodleian Library, Bodley 34: *Hali Meiðhad* (S Salop C13a2).

(17) Singular *is* = present; *beo* = subjunctive; *bið* = future:

Meiðhad **is** þ tresor . þ **beo** hit eanes forloren; ne
Maidenhood **is** that treasure, that **be** it once lost, not

bið hit neau*er* funden
shall be it never found

(18) Plural *beoð* = present (parallel to singular *is*):

Hƿen þ*us* **is** of riche; hƿet ƿenest tu of þe poure.
When thus it **is** of the rich, what thinkest thou of the poor,

þe **beoð** ƿacliche iȝeuen
who **are** unworthily given

(19) Plural *beoð* = formally identical to present, but perhaps implying future, parallel to 'shall sing' in the second part of the sentence. If so, the system is formally defective:

For ȝef ha þ*us* **beoð** acƿiket [..] ha **beoð**
For if they thus **are/shall be** revived [..] they **are/shall be**

in ƿideƿene reng & **schulen** in ƿideƿene reng biuore þe
in widows' rank and **shall** in widows' rank before the

iweddede. **singen** in heouene
wedded, **sing** in heaven

TYPE 3: Midland system

As with TYPE 1, text languages of this type show *s*-forms of the *am*, *art*, *is* type for the present indicative singular, leaving *be*, *bist*, *biþ* or *bes* type spellings available to express future sense. Subjunctive singular is *be(o)* (or less common *si(e)*, *se*). Present indicative plural is *s*-root *sinden* and/or *arn/are* type with *be(o)n* for the plural subjunctive. Inflected *be(o)þ* type spellings are available to be reserved for plural future sense. The example below is from Oxford, Bodleian Library, Laud Misc 108, *Havelok* (West Norfolk C14a1). Bernard reports to Ubba how Havelok fought and slew 60 ruffians single-handed and is a bit worse for wear.

(20) Singular *is* = present; *bes* = future:

But it **is** of him mikel scaþe \ I woth þat he **bes**
But he **is** badly wounded \ I believe that he **shall be**

ded ful raþe
dead very soon

The second example is from London, British Library, Cotton Titus D.xviii, *Ancrene Riwle* (S Cheshire C13a2).

(21) Plural *arn* = present (parallel to singular *is*); *beoð* = future; *beon* = subjunctive:

Þis **is** a sƿiðe dredliche ƿord to ƿepman & to ƿimmen ꝥ sƿiðe sone scheaƿen ham to hƿase ƿile . ȝe **arn** bitacnet þe vnƿrihene put . ꝥ **is** oƿre feire neb oƿre hƿite sƿire . oƿre lihte ehe . oƿre honde ȝif ȝe ham scheaƿen . ȝet **beoð** oƿre ƿordes put . bote ho **beon** þe betere biset .

'This **is** a very dreadful saying to men and to women who are quick to show themselves to whoever desires. Ye **are** a symbol of the uncovered pit: that **is**, your fair face, your white neck, your bright eye, your hands, if ye show them. Even your words **shall be** a pit unless they **be** better directed.'

TYPE 4: Northern system

Text languages of this type are confined to the northern counties. They have for the present indicative singular *am*, *er(t)/es*, *es/is* and for the plural *er/es/ar*; subjunctive singular and plural *be*. The inflected *b*-root forms are available to express futurity and are the same for singular and plural: the *bes*-type.

For early Middle English very few texts survive from the North and the *LAEME* time-span had to be expanded beyond 1300 in order to have any coverage there at all. So the texts in *LAEME* that show this system are from the first quarter of the fourteenth century. They are therefore nearer in both time and space than the rest of the *LAEME* corpus to the Older Scots materials displayed in *LAOS*, whose finite forms for 'be' are also of great interest. The example below is from Edinburgh, Royal College of Physicians, MS of *Cursor Mundi*, Hand A (Yorks East Riding C14a1). Much of the context is future in sense, being about what is to occur at doomsday at the end of the world. As the numerous examples in the text show, the simple future is expressed here with periphrastic *sal* 'shall'. Contrast, however, *er* present indicative plural (line 1, cf. singular *es* line 5) with *bes* future plural (line 12).

(23)

1	Mani wenis þat **er** vnwis	Many think, who **are** unwise,
	Þat tat fleis hal suld neu*er* ris	That the flesh whole should never rise.
	Nou I sal te resun rede	Now I shall thee reason read,
	And out of mistrouni*n*g you lede	And out of misbelieving you lead.
5	Wit ye wel it **es** na rihtt	Know ye well, it **is** not right
	For-to mistroun in godes miht	To misbelieve in God's might
	...	...
	Sua halli sal tai risin þar	So wholly shall they rise there,
	Þaim sal noht wa*n*t an hefdis har	To them shall not want a head's hair,
	Ne noht a nail of fot or hand	Nor not a nail of foot or hand.
10	Þohq*ue*þir we sal wnd*er*stand	However, we shall understand
	Þat nail a*nd* har þat hauis ben schorn	That nail and hair that have been shorn
	Bes noth al q*ua*r þai war biforn	**Shall be** not all where they were before.
	Bot als pott*er* wit pottes dos	But as a potter with pots does,
	Quen his new vessel fordos	When [he] his new vessel destroys,
15	He castis it al in a bal	He makes it all into a ball
	A bett*er* forto mak wit-al	To make a better [one] with it.
	Of noht he lokes quilk was quilk	Of none [of it] he considers which [bit] was which,
	Bot makes anoþ*er* of þat ilk	But makes another of the same stuff,
	Wel fairer þan þe first was wroth	Much fairer than the first was made;
20	Riht sua sal *cri*st ne dout þou noht	Right so shall Christ [do], doubt thou not.

4. Prospect

This paper has drawn attention to the continuation into early Middle English of a variable Old English grammatical distinction, and its apparent exaptation for use in different subsystems in early Middle English. More work is needed before we can assess the extent and duration of these temporary subsystems. Questions about 'be' and futurity in Middle English that would reward investigation are:

1. Does TYPE 1 above simply continue an Old English system?
2. What part does the verb *weorþan* play in the story of 'be' futurity in Old and Middle English?
3. How does the rise of the expression of futurity with 'shall' (especially the 'shall be' type) interact with TYPES 1-4 above?

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Stylistic fronting in the history of English

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Stylistic fronting is an operation which moves elements generally occupying the position to the right of the finite verb such as adjectives, past participles, and adverbs to the position immediately preceding it in clauses with a subject gap. The operation is typically observed in Modern Icelandic and in earlier stages of the Scandinavian languages. In this article I will extensively examine Old and Middle English texts and show that word order patterns arguably attributed to stylistic fronting are widely observed both in Old and Middle English and are not confined to texts which are likely to have been heavily influenced by Old Norse speakers. This is contrary to Trips (2002), who attributes the presence of the stylistic fronting patterns in the *Ormulum* to the Scandinavian invasions. Taking into consideration the wide distribution of relevant examples, I will conclude that the process of stylistic fronting was a genuine property of Old and Middle English.

1. Introduction

The aim of this article is to show that stylistic fronting, which is typically observed in Modern Icelandic and earlier stages of the Scandinavian languages in general, is also extensively attested in Old and Middle English. This analysis enables us to account for word order differences between clauses with a full NP subject on the one hand and those with a personal pronoun subject or those with a subject gap on the other. An interesting consequence of the present study is that we cannot attribute the origin of stylistic fronting to the Scandinavian influences as claimed in Trips (2002).

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