MARKERS OF FUTURITY IN OLD ENGLISH AND THE
GRAMMATICALIZATION OF SHALL AND WILL

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the use of potential source lexemes of future markers in Old English, such as willan, sculan, beon and weorþan. First their frequency is analysed in a selection of texts from the OE part of the Helsinki Corpus and compared to the frequency of their cognate forms in Old High German. This quantitative analysis is followed by an examination of the use of these verbs in their respective construction types. In this way it will be demonstrated why in Old English willan and sculan were more suitable candidates for grammaticalisation as auxiliaries to denote future time than beon and weorþan.

1 This paper is part of a larger project, a comparative study of the grammaticalisation of future markers in English and German. It is partly based on an unpublished paper co-authored by Gabriele Diewald (Univ. Hannover), Angelika Lutz (Univ. Erlangen) and Mechthild Habermann (Univ. Erlangen), which we presented at the conference “New Reflections on Grammaticalization 2”, held at the University of Amsterdam, 4-6 April 2002. The project tries to answer the question of why it is will and shall in English, but werden in German that were grammaticalised as future grams. For this reason we will first compare the situation in Old English (OE) and Old High German (OHG) on the basis of corpus data. The principles concerning the design of the language corpora used and the basic considerations that have led to the building of our data-base are the comparability and the quantity of texts. Wherever possible we use maximally comparable texts in German and in English with respect to chronology, text type, content etc. The size of the analysed texts comprise about 80 000 words for English as well as for German. The length of the individual text sections varies according to availability. Since the work is still in progress I will not be able to present any final data, but I will show certain tendencies with a special focus on the English data.
1. Theoretical preliminaries

According to Bybee et al. (1994: 244) a future gram signals “… a prediction on the part of the speaker that the situation in the proposition, which refers to an event taking place after the moment of speech, will hold”. Markers of futurity are not necessarily grammatical means. There can be lexical units or pragmatic expressions that signal future reference as well. Such markers are often poly-functional, having future as only one of their uses. Furthermore, they can exist in layers with or without functional specification that vary in their degree of grammaticalisation.

In Modern English futurity can be expressed by will/shall, be going to, the present progressive or the simple present. This formal variability is the main reason why the existence of a future tense in Modern English is sometimes questioned.

Bybee et al. (1994: 244) distinguish between two types of futures according to their source structures:

1) Primary Futures: constructions involving movement verbs  
markers of obligation, desire, and ability  
temporal adverbs
2) Aspectual Futures: forms expressing perfective/inceptive or imperfective aspect

2. Frequency of the source lexemes

It is commonly argued that OE had only two tenses: a past and a non-past. Futurity is expressed by the present tense and additional lexical or pragmatic means. On the other hand, the verbs willan, sculan, weorþan and beon, as well as the verbal prefix ge- are often referred to as conveying a future meaning.

This raises the following two questions: (1) To what extent did there exist suitable source lexemes/constructions for grammaticalisation? (2) To what extent had they already been grammaticalised?

The history of will and shall as prime exponents of futurity in English is discussed in more or less detail in most handbooks on English historical syntax and in many treatments on the history of English modals (cf. e.g. Jespersen 1919; Mustanoja 1960; Kisbye 1971; Berndt 1982; Arnovick 1990; van Kemenade 1993). OE weorþan is mainly dealt with in connection with passive markers. It is often claimed that passive constructions with weorþan in the present tense have a future connotation (Kilpiö 1989: 61-62; Mitchell 1985: §755; Visser 1973: §1918). Similarly, the use of OE beon for future states of being or statements of eternal truth is often mentioned in passing but hardly ever elaborated
any further. The aspectual character of OE/OHG prefixed verbs, especially those with ge-/gi-, and their potential force to refer to future events is mentioned e.g. in Streitberg (1891), Bloomfield (1929), Mossé (1938), Brunner (1965), Lindemann (1965), Leiss (1992), Lass (1994), Eröms (1997), Wischer – Habermann (2005). Nevertheless, the development of will and shall into future grams in English is more or less taken for granted without considering other potential alternative sources in OE.

The restructuring of the English aspectual system and the loss of the verbal prefixes let us exclude the prefixed verbs from our analysis. An aspectual future based on perfective aspect markers could not develop in English. That leaves us with the potential source lexemes will, shall, weorþan and beon. We assume that for a successful grammaticalisation at least two preconditions are jointly relevant:

1) the frequent use of the source lexeme > leading to semantic and phonetic attrition
2) its occurrence in a suitable construction type > leading to reanalysis

Therefore we analysed first the frequency of the relevant items and second the construction types in which they were used in OE and OHG text corpora.

The English data are based on a selection of texts from the OE part of the Helsinki Corpus. It comprises about 80 000 word forms of text segments dating from 880-1120.

- **AB** = Alfred’s Boethius (ca. 880): about 11 000 word forms, West Saxon dialect, translation from Latin;
- **AC** = Alfred’s Cura Pastoralis (ca. 885): about 18 000 word forms, West Saxon dialect, translation from Latin;
- **AO** = Alfred’s Orosius (ca. 885): about 9 000 word forms, West Saxon dialect, free translation from Latin;
- **WG** = West Saxon Gospels (ca. 990): about 10 000 word forms, West Saxon dialect, translation from Latin;
- **LG** = Lindisfarne Gospels (ca. 960): about 9 000 word forms, Northumbrian dialect, gloss from Latin;
- **C1** = Chronicle MS E (ca. 970-1050): about 9 000 words, West Saxon dialect;
- **C2** = Chronicle MS E (ca. 1070-1120): about 9 000 words, West Saxon dialect;
- **GG** = Gregory the Great (manuscript dating from ca. 1100; original from 885): about 5 000 word forms, West Saxon dialect, translation from Latin.
The distribution and frequency of the source lexemes in the OE texts is given in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency of source lexemes in OE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>willan</th>
<th>sculan</th>
<th>weorþan</th>
<th>beon¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Σ</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Σ</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>0,76</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>0,21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>0,66</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>0,46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>0,46</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0,21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WG</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0,37</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0,05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LG</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0,17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0,01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>0,47</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0,48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>0,38</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0,13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GG</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0,32</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>0,38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>389</strong></td>
<td><strong>0,49</strong></td>
<td><strong>205</strong></td>
<td><strong>0,25</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹occurs only in the present tense and in infinitive

Table 2 shows the frequency of the OE source lexemes in their present tense forms, which are the most relevant forms for a grammaticalisation of future markers.

Table 2. Frequency of source lexemes (present tense) in OE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>willan</th>
<th>sculan</th>
<th>weorþan</th>
<th>beon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Σ</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>Σ</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AB</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0,34</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0,18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AC</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>0,30</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>0,31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0,07</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0,04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WG</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0,15</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0,01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LG</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0,07</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0,02</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GG</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0,12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0,06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>126</strong></td>
<td><strong>0,16</strong></td>
<td><strong>83</strong></td>
<td><strong>0,10</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A comparison between OE and OHG (Table 3) reveals remarkable differences (cf. Figure 1).
It becomes obvious that *weorþan* was much more frequent already in OHG than in OE. In OE the most frequent source lexeme was *beon*. However, it only partly overlapped semantically with *weorþan*. It was most often used to denote general truth, often with a future implication, or a prediction for the future, but it lacked the inceptive connotation found with *weorþan*, cf. ex. (1) and (2):

1) & for ðæm ege hi *beoð* simle swiðe earme
   ‘and because of that fear they *will always be* very miserable’
   
   *(AB: 117.28).*

2) Giet cymð se micla … Godes dæg, se dæg *hidæ* irres dæg...
   ‘There will come the great … day of God, the day *will be* a day of wrath…’
   
   *(CP: 245.2).*

Nevertheless, it can be seen as a rival to *weorþan*. A comparison between the OHG *Tatian* and the OE *Lindisfarne Gospels* rendering the same Latin text shows that where OHG uses *werdan* or a form of *wesan* (*‘to be’*) to translate Latin futures, OE prefers *beon*, cf. Table 4.
Table 4. The rendering of Latin futures in the OHG Tatian and the OE Lindisfarne Gospels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Latin</th>
<th>Tatian</th>
<th>Lindisfarne Gospels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>II.14 Et <em>erit</em> tibi</td>
<td>Inth her <em>ist</em> thir gifehu...</td>
<td>&amp; <em>bið</em> gefea <em>ðe</em>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gaudium...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>et multi in ... <em>gaudebunt</em>.</td>
<td>inti manage in ... mendent.</td>
<td>&amp; monigo in ... <em>biðon</em> glæde.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.15 <em>Erit</em> enim magnus</td>
<td>Her <em>ist</em> uuárlihho mihhil fora...</td>
<td><em>Bið</em> forðon micel befora...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>coram...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>et spiritu sancto</td>
<td>inti heilages geistes uuirdit gifullit...</td>
<td>&amp; gaaste halge gefyllæd <em>biðo</em>...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>replebitur</em>...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.20 Et ecce <em>eris</em></td>
<td>Inth nu uuirdist suigenti...</td>
<td>&amp; heono <em>ðu</em> bist sui-genda...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tacens...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... quo haec <em>fiant</em>,</td>
<td>... in themo thisu uuer-dent,</td>
<td>... of <em>ðæm</em> <em>ðas</em> ge-wordes...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... <em>queae implebuntur</em></td>
<td>... thiu thar gifultu uuer-dent in ... ziti.</td>
<td>... <em>ða</em> ðe gefyllæd <em>biðon</em> on tid...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in tempore...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.35 ... et quod <em>nascetur</em></td>
<td>... thaz thar giboran uu-irdit heilag,</td>
<td>... <em>ðætte</em> acenned <em>bið</em> halig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sanctum</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>vocabitum</em> filius dei.</td>
<td>thaz uuirdit ginemnit bið geceid sunu godes.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... <em>perficientur</em> ea quae...</td>
<td>... uuanta thiu uuerdent gotes barn.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>... <em>quoniam</em></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Construction types of the source lexemes

Not only recent construction based approaches to grammaticalisation (cf. Rostila 2004) emphasize the importance of the syntactic context of the lexical item that is about to be grammaticalised. Any starting point of a process of grammaticalisation is a productive construction containing a lexeme with a very general meaning, which occurs frequently in this construction. Thus, it is not only the frequency and the semantics of the source lexeme alone, but its occur-
Lexical verbs can only turn into auxiliaries if they appear in constructions containing another verbal element, preferably a non-finite form of the verb. Table 5 presents the construction types of the OE source lexemes in the present tense.

Table 5. Construction types of the source lexemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Constructions</th>
<th>willan</th>
<th>sculan</th>
<th>weorþan</th>
<th>beon</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Suitable:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Infinitive</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>212</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Present Part</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ Past Participle</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>[+ Finite Clause]</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsuitable:</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>274</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ NP</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ AP</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+ PP</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intransitive</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1 only TO-infinitives
2 only suitable for future passive

3.1. Weorþan and beon

As Bybee et al. (1994: 275-277) point out, “aspectual futures”, especially the ones that develop from perfective aspectual meanings, are cross-linguistically very rare. In OE weorþan and beon exist as potential source lexemes, however, as we can see, compared to willan and sculan they occur in rather unsuitable construction types. A very dominant type is “Vcopula + Complement”:

3) forðæm þe ælc þing wyrð to nauhte gif hit nauht goodes on him næfð ‘because everything comes to naught if it has nothing good in it’  
   \( AB: 34.83.1 \).

4) Giet cymð se micla … Godes dæg, se dæg bið irres dæg ‘Yet there shall come the big … day of God, the day will be a day of wrath’  
   \( AC: 35.245.2 \).

To this type may also belong most of the combinations with past participle. With both verbs they constitute the most frequent construction. Due to the verbal origin of the participle they are even suitable to be reanalysed as periphrastic
constructions, however only with a passive sense; cf. examples (5)-(6):

5) Gif þu þonne ænne stan toclifst, ne wyrð he næfre gegadrod swa he ær wæs
   ‘If you split a stone, it will never be united like he was before’
   \( (AB: 34.92.28) \).

6) gif us ðæt ne mislicað ðæt us ær licode, ðonne ne bid hit no us fargifen
   ‘if we do not dislike what we liked before, then it will not be forgiven us’
   \( (AC: 54.425.3) \).

An analogical extension to active futures would have required a far higher frequency in clear future uses. Most of the beon-examples, however, and even quite a number of the weordan-constructions rather convey a sense of general truth. The same is true for the examples with the present participle, which, although they have an active meaning, are comparatively rare and with weordan almost nonexistent (in contrast to OHG):

7) Swa bid dis eorðlice lif oft yðgiende swa swa sæ
   ‘So this earthly life often fluctuates like the sea’ \( (AC: 52.409.35) \).

8) Be ðæm eac cwæð Dryhten ðurh Essaias ðone witgan: ðinra synna ne weorðe ic gemunende, ac gemun ðu hiora.
   ‘Then the Lord said via the prophet Essaias: I will not remember your sins, but you shall remember them’ \( (AC: 53.413.20) \).

In general, the number of occurrences for OE weordan is quite low, and it gradually decreases from early OE until its final demise in late Middle English (ME); cf. the figures for the present-tense forms of weordan in the Helsinki Corpus listed in Figure 2:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>850-950</th>
<th>950-1050</th>
<th>1150-1250</th>
<th>1250-1350</th>
<th>1350-1450</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OE</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ME</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure2. Occurrences of present-tense forms of weordan in the different sections of the Helsinki Corpus

With beon a decline in use, like with weordan, from OE through ME is not ob-
servable. However, in ME the two paradigms, that of *wesan* and that of *beon*, merge into one paradigm, the forms of *wesan* (*am, art, is, are*) being used in the indicative, and *be* (the former OE *beo, beon*) being used invariably to express the subjunctive and the infinitive. Furthermore, for phonotactic reasons the inflected forms *bid* and *beoð* became increasingly rare in ME (cf. Lutz 1991: 94-116).

This, together with the unsuitable construction types makes the forms of OE *weordan* and *beon* unlikely candidates for grammaticalisation as auxiliaries to denote future time, despite their semantic suitability.

3.2. Willan and sculan

In contrast to *weorthan* and *beon, willan* and *sculan* are predominantly used in suitable construction types (cf. Table 5). In many contexts, however, they still convey a modal meaning. Nevertheless, while *weorthan* and *beon* predominantly function as copula and thus do not have auxiliary status, *will* and *shall* are in most cases unambiguously used as auxiliaries, as in ex. (9) and (10).

9)  *Hu ne meaht þu gesion þæt ælc wyrt & ælc wudu wile weaxan on þæm lande selst þe him betst gerist...*
   ‘Canst thou not see that each plant and each tree *will grow* best in land that suits it best...’  
   *(AB: 91:13).*

10) *Ac þæt is swiðe dyslic & swiðe micel syn þæt mon þæs wenan scyle be Gode*
   ‘But it is very great folly and sin *to think* thus of God...’  
   *(AB: 84:18).*

Though the syntax of Old English does not allow a definite categorization of *will* and *shall* as auxiliaries, the word order still being rather flexible and the NICE properties\(^2\) not applicable yet, the semantics, however, is often a clear indicator of their auxiliary status. In both ex. (9) and (10) an interpretation in terms of their original lexical meaning does not make sense.

In Modern English, the auxiliary status of *will* and *shall*, like that of all modals, is characterized by certain morphological, syntactic and semantic features (cf. Denison 1993: 292-293). In the following these shall be compared to the situation in Old English in order to determine the degree of grammaticalisation of *willan* and *sculan* in Old English.

3.2.1. Morphological features

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\(^2\) Cf. Huddleston (1976: 333): N: they can be Negated by a following *not/n’t*, I: in Interrogative clauses they undergo subject-verb inversion; C: they occur in post-verbal ellipses (Code) instead of *do*; E: and they can carry Emphatic stress instead of using *do*; i.e. they function as operators.
In Modern English *will* and *shall* have no non-finite forms. They have no *-s* in the 3rd person singular present indicative. They have very irregular “past forms”. They are negated by adding an enclitic *not/n’t*. They can occur in phonologically reduced forms, *will/would* can even be cliticized (*’ll/’d*).

There is no single occurrence of *willan* or *sculan* in a non-finite form in our text corpus, neither in the infinitive nor in the present or past participle. Both verbs lack the typical *-ð* ending in the 3rd person singular present indicative: *willan* is an anomalous verb, ending in *-e*, and *sculan* belongs to the preterite-present verbs having no inflection for this person and number at all. Although both verbs have a weak past, their formation is irregular due to their status as anomalous/preterite-present verbs: *wille/wolde; sceal/scolde*. The negation of *willan* differs from that of most lexical verbs. The proclitic negative particle *ne* often merges with the verb stem giving forms like *nylle* or *nolde*. This is not possible with *sculan* because of its initial [*ʃ*]. On the other hand, the initial [*w*] cannot be the only reason for the fusion of *ne*, since it never occurs with *weorþan* or *wil-nian*. Phonologically reduced forms could not be attested in our corpus. However, that might be due to the fact that we only have access to the written language and its spelling conventions. Summarizing, it can be stated that *willan* and *sculan* share most of the morphological features of Modern English *will* and *shall* that distinguish them from lexical verbs.

### 3.2.2. Syntactic features

In Modern English *will* and *shall* are complemented by the plain infinitive. They cannot occur in a sequence of modals. They do not form a progressive, perfect or passive, and they do not have an imperative. They always fill the first position in a finite verbal group. They function as operators having the NICE properties.

84% of all *willan* tokens and 96% of *sculan* in our OE corpus are complemented by an infinitive, and in all of the cases it is the bare infinitive. Since there are no non-finite forms in our corpus, consequently *willan* and *sculan* never occur in a sequence of modals, and they do not form any progressive, perfect or passive constructions. There are 8 instances of an imperative with *willan*, but they only occur in the *Lindisfarne Gospels*, which is a Latin gloss, to render Latin negative imperatives, cf. ex. (11):

11) … ille dixit          nolite      flere non     est     mortua sed dormit
    … he cuoeð          nallad  ge woepa  ne  is  dead  ah slepeð
    he said            not-will you weep not  is  dead  but  sleeps
    ‘… he said, don’t weep, he is not dead but only sleeping’ (LG: 8.52).
The word order criterion and the operator function do not apply in OE as has already been mentioned. Still, it should have become obvious that in their syntactic behaviour OE willan and sculan also resemble Modern English will and shall and differ thus from lexical verbs.

3.2.3. The status of willan and sculan as future grams

According to the handbooks, will and shall have in some uses already become quite close to future markers, expressing a mere prediction:

12) Nu ðu miht ongitan hu hefig & hu earfoðe þis is eall to gerecanne; ac ic sceal þe peah hwæthwugu his onginnan þe to tæcann.
   ‘Now, thou canst perceive how heavy and how difficult it is to explain all this; but nevertheless I will set to work to teach thee somewhat…’
   (AB: 127.21).

13) he cuæð ðæt ðæs Halgan Gæstes lar wille fleon lesungu.
   ‘he said that the doctrine of the Holy Spirit will flee falsehood’

They are also often used to render Latin futures:

14) Ic cume eft to þe on þisne timan and þin wif Sarra sceall habban sunu
    … et habebit filium Sara
    (Kisbye 1971: 111).

15) Ic wille wyrcean min setl on norðdæle and wielle bion gelic ðæm niehstan ponam sedem meam ad aquilonem et ero similes altissimo
    (AC: 111, 124-5).

By late OE, if not earlier (according to Denison 1993: 304), will and shall “had developed a use which was almost a future tense.” Even if willan and sculan in most cases have a modal colouring in OE⁴, there is enough evidence that they can occur as mere futures. In these cases where they combine with stative verbs (as in the second clause in (14)) or with subjects that are incompatible with a volitional sense (as in (13)) it becomes obvious that the semantic bleaching has been successfully completed already in OE.

⁴ This is actually the same in Modern English: “Although these constructions [will/shall + Infinitive] are the closest approximations to a colourless, neutral future, they also cover a range of modal meanings” (Greenbaum – Quirk 1992: 57).
The semantic features of willan and sculan (as well as their morphology and syntax) tell us that they had been highly grammaticalised already in OE. This is also supported by the fact that in their respective lexical meanings they had been replaced in OE by other verbs or paraphrases, such as wilnian or we-san/bean + scyldig:

16) Hwæþer þu giet ongite þæt ða uncweðendan gesceafta wilnodon to bionne on ecnesse swa ilce swa men, gif hi meahten?
   ‘Dost thou yet perceive that the dumb creatures would like to live for ever, as men do, if they were able?’ (AB: 92.16).

17) … ac onfôh hiora nu, forðæm hit is se læcedom & se drenc þe þu lange wilnodest, þæt du þy eð môe þære lare onfon
   ‘Well then, hear one, for ‘tis the medicine and the drink thou hast long been craving, so that thou mayest the more readily receive my teaching’ (AB: 135.18).

18) ... se ðe ymb his hlafordes fiorh sierwe, sie he wið ðone his feores scyldig& ealles ðæs ðe he age
   ‘the one who strives after his Lord’s life, he may owe him his life and everything that he owns’ (Alfred’s Laws: 50. 4.2.).

A check on the expressions of what comes closest to a mere future in the section of Alfred’s Boethius revealed the following frequency:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>willan</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>present indicative</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>beon</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sculan</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>present subjunctive</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>weorthan</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Here willan clearly dominates with 44 % of all future expressions.

4. Summary

Although in ME futurity is still much more frequently expressed by the simple present than in Modern English, shall and will are gaining more and more ground as future markers. Their grammaticalisation began in OE. From a variety of potential source lexemes will and shall have proved most successful, in contrast to the development in German. Their auxiliarisation process had been
Markers of futurity in Old English...

more advanced in OE than in OHG, they occurred in more suitable construction types, and the rival forms decreased in frequency for phonotactic reasons.

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