It is a well-known fact that the Old Swedish subjunctive was used in constructions that are conditional, hypothetical comparative, directive, and desiderative. Particularly in Early Old Swedish, however, the subjunctive also figured in declarative at-clauses after predicates of belief and fear (so-called non-factive predicates; e.g. *thýkkja* ‘to be of the opinion’, *þánkia* ‘think’, *troa* ‘believe’, *synas* ‘seem’ and *ræþas* ‘fear’) to indicate that the proposition was not a fact, but merely a subjective judgment. Analysis performed on Old Swedish texts showed that in the Early Old Swedish period, approximately 28% of these clauses were in the subjunctive. Even so, the investigation also revealed that the use of the subjunctive for some reason drastically declined during the Late Old Swedish period (as opposed to the subjunctive in e.g. conditional construction, which partly survived well into the Modern Swedish period). In this article, two traditional explanations for the decline are shown to be inadequate: the general reduction of the inflectional system and the rise of the modal verbs. As regards the latter, another investigation revealed that the proportion of modal verbs did not increase with the decline of the subjunctive. Rather, the disappearance of the subjunctive in at-clauses after non-factive predicates has been ascribed to the replacement of the present potential subjunctive by the past potential subjunctive.

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