LEGE ARTIS

THE SWEDISH *BLI*-PASSIVE IN A DIACHRONIC PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract: The paper follows the history of the Swedish verb *bli* "remain" from a lexical loan from Middle Low German in the 14th century to its establishment as a passive auxiliary replacing the original *varþa* "become" in the 17th century. It argues that the impulse for the grammaticalization of *bli* was the rise of polysemy of the verb and its subsequent coalescence with *varþa*. The study is based on original diachronic data and advances a model of grammaticalization of the lexical verb into a passive auxiliary.

Key words: passive voice, auxiliary, grammaticalization, Swedish, analytical passive, diachrony.

1. Introduction

Modern Swedish is a language with two passives: morphological (the so-called *s*-passive) and periphrastic (the so-called *bli*-passive). Both passive constructions are relatively young diachronically and their development can, at least partly, be followed in extant sources. In both cases, the same construction performs the pre-passive (source) and the passive (target) functions (see Givón 2006: 342), i.e. it retains the original meanings and uses.

The *s*-passive is formed with an extra-inflectional suffix, originally a reflexive pronoun (see Holm 1952; Óttosson 1992) and the periphrastic *bli*-passive is formed with an auxiliary *bli*, a shortened version of the original *bliva* "to remain", and a past participle.

The aim of the present paper is to follow the development of the verb *bliva* "to remain/to become" from its earliest attestations in Swedish to its grammaticalization as passive auxiliary. In particular, the relationship between *bliva* and the original passive auxiliary *varþa* "to become", will be in focus (see Section 2).

The auxiliary *bli* is a Middle Low German loanword in Swedish with the first attestation ca. 1300 in a Swedish translation of the Torah (*Pentateukparafrasen*), according to the Swedish Academy Dictionary of the Swedish language (Svenska akademiens ordbok, hereinafter SAOB). Its original meaning was similar to Modern German *bleiben*, i.e. "to remain" (see also Boas & Höder 2018). At the time when the verb was borrowed, there already was a periphrastic passive, or a passive-like construction, which was made up of a past participle and the auxiliary *varþa* "to become". The latter became gradually ousted by the loan *bliva*, as it gained new meanings. Both the original lexical meaning and all the later meanings are still grammatical in Modern Swedish and exist alongside the passive auxiliary use of the verb (see Section 3 for an overview).

Both passives are examples of well-documented developments, i.e. auxiliary plus nonfinite verb form and a reflexive, which grammaticalises into a passive marker. Both processes are robustly attested for many Indo-European languages (Zúñiga & Kittilä 2019: 225). We shall not be concerned with the latter and will focus on the former only, i.e. the rise of the analytical passive. There is a number of lexical verbs in the languages of the world that seem to have developed similarly into passive auxiliaries, among them equivalents of "become", "be" (English, Hungarian), "go" (Ecuadorian Quechua), "come" (Finnish), "suffer" (Vietnamese), "receive, get" (German, English), "fall" (Tamil), and "touch" (Thai Burmese), see Heine and Kuteva (2002) and Zúñiga and Kittilä (2019). The verbs corresponding in meaning to "remain" are rare in this group – apart from North Germanic *bliva* there is Polish *zostać* (both *bliva* and *zostać* are polysemous and also mean "become") and Italian *rimanere*, potentially a nascent passive auxiliary (Schwarze 2003; Telve 2016), which, together with the textual

documentation allowing the reconstruction, makes the Swedish *bli*-passive an interesting object of study. Surprisingly, while *s*-passive has been the subject of a number of detailed diachronic studies (notably two monographs: Holm (1952) for Swedish and Óttosson (1992) for the closely related Icelandic), a larger study of the history of *bli* is as yet lacking.

As we have stated above, both Swedish passive constructions are relatively young diachronically, as indeed most passive constructions seem to be (see Givón 2006: 342). In Haspelmath (1990) only 31 out of 80 languages studied were found to have a passive construction, despite an intuitive feeling that it is usual for a language to have passive constructions. The WALS sample shows that out of 373 languages less than half, i.e. 162, have a passive construction. It should be noted that the sample includes even debatable cases, e.g., passive in Palauan, which is taken as an example of a topic construction rather than a passive one in Haspelmath (ibid.) (based on de Wolff (1988). These results show that there are fewer languages with passive morphology than without. In other words, there is a potential grammaticalization area and passives may be emergent in many languages.

Taking into account relatively low frequency of the passive constructions in the languages of the world, it is even more interesting to see that in most languages the passive is formed by adding a passive affix to a verb and the use of a copula plus an adjectival in passive clauses is rare outside Indo-European (Dryer 1982: 55). In the Gramcat's sample used in Haspelmath (1990) only 6 languages (out of 80) were shown to have a periphrastic passive construction (Danish, a close relative of Swedish, was included in the sample).

In the present paper the term 'construction' is used with respect to the syntagmatic context within which the grammaticalizing item can be found. The term in this meaning is taken from Himmelmann (2004), who argues in favour of considering not just

isolated lexical items but rather whole constructions in grammaticalization studies (ibid., 31).

Two Modern Swedish passives are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Two passives in Modern Swedish

tense	*s*-passive	*bli*-passive	English translation
present tense	Bollen **kastas** (av pojken).	Bollen **blir kastad** (av pojken).	The ball is (being) thrown (by the boy).
preterite	Bollen **kastades**.	Bollen **blev kastad**.	The ball was thrown.
perfect	Bollen **har/hade kastats**.	Bollen **har/hade kastats**.	The ball has been thrown.
future/modal	Bollen ska **kastas**.	Bollen ska **bli kastad**.	The ball will be thrown.

Both the morphological and the periphrastic passive are available in all tenses, which makes Swedish unique among the Mainland Scandinavian languages (Danish, Norwegian, Swedish). All Mainland Scandinavian languages have developed both passive constructions, however, the distribution of the *s*-passive is more restricted in Danish and Norwegian than it is in Swedish and it is only occasionally used in other tenses than the present (see Engdahl (1999) for an exhaustive overview of the factors conditioning the choice of *bli*-passive vs *s*-passive in Swedish and Laanemets (2012) on the differences between Danish, Norwegian, and Swedish with respect to the distribution, meaning and use of both passives).

The past participle in the *bli*-passive retains its adjectival character and agrees with the subject in number and, in the singular, also in gender, as illustrated in Examples 1-3. In this respect, the past participle in Swedish behaves just like an adjective, as shown in Examples 4-6.

(1) *Boll-**en***   *blev kastad/*kastat*.

ball.C.SG-DEF   became thrown.C.SG/thrown.N.SG;

'The ball was thrown.'

(2) *Tak-**et***   *blev*   *målat/*måla**d***.

       roof.N.SG-DEF   became   painted.N.SG/painted.C.SG

       'The roof was painted.'

(3) *Boll-**ar-na***   *blev*   *kasta**de**/*kastad/*kastat*.

       ball.C-PL-DEF   became   thrown.PL/thrown.C.SG/thrown.N.SG

       'The balls were thrown.'

(4) *Boll-**en***   *var*   *grön/*grön**t***.

       ball.C.SG-DEF   was   green.C.SG/green.N.SG

       'The ball was green.'

(5) *Tak-**et***   *var*   *grön**t**/*grön*.

       roof.N.SG-DEF   was   green.N.SG/green.C.SG

       'The roof was green.'

(6) ***De***   *var*   *grön-**a**/*grön/*grönt*.

       they   were   green-PL/green.C.SG/green.N.SG

       'They were green.'

The auxiliary *bli* is a Middle Low German loan in Swedish, from *bliven*, related to Gothic *bileiban* and Dutch *blijven*. It retains its original uses in Modern Swedish, but has also developed new ones. The list of the main contemporary meanings of *bli* is given below. The use in the meaning I, "remain", is today considered dated and is mainly restricted to lexicalised phrases such as *bli hemma* "stay at home", with a higher representation in the southern Swedish dialects (SAOB).

I. remain

"remain" in a certain location

(7)   *Bure fick **bliva** hos modern, tills han var tolv år gammal.* Melin 1910, after SAOB)

'Bure got to remain with the mother until he was twelve years old.'

"remain" in a certain manner (Modern Swedish prefers *förbli* in this meaning)

(8)   *Hvad sår jag fått jag ensam vet / Och det må **bli** min hemlighet.* (Strandberg 1877, after SAOB)

'What wound I received I alone know / And it may remain my secret.'

(9)   *(Den fångne örnen) **blev** sittande stilla på samma plats.* (Lagerlöf 1907, after SAOB)

'(The captured eagle) remained sitting calmly in the same place.'

II. become
"arise" of a situation, state

(10)   *Det **blir** nog snart regn.* (after SAOB)

'It arises probably soon rain.' (= It will probably rain soon.)

III. passive auxiliary

(11)   *Lokalen **blir** uppvärmd.* (after SAOB)

'The room is heated.'

About the second and third group of uses SAOB says that they have originated in "remain", in constructions, in which "become" could be the alternative meaning, e.g., *blifva (stanna) på platsen död* (= "remain in a certain place dead"), which came to be understood as "become dead". Such uses of *bliva* have likely been borrowed from Middle Low German (where phrases *dot bliven* "dead remain" have been attested).

SAOB further states that the use of *bliva* as a passive auxiliary seems to have become common in the 17th century and that the competition with *s*-passive has largely been a matter of style, with *s*-passive characteristic of written discourse and *bli*-passive more often found in spoken language.

Engdahl (1999) is a study of passive constructions in Modern Swedish, with focus on the competition between the morphological *s*-passive and the periphrastic *bli*-passive. She concludes that although both constructions express the passive voice and have full paradigms, there are nevertheless factors that may favour one over the other. These are not stylistic, but rather have to do with the animacy of the subject of the passive clause (see also Skrzypek 2016). The periphrastic *bli*-passive is favoured when the subject is animate and exerts some control over the situation (however un-passive that may sound). It seems that in many instances the *bli*-passive may be translated as "X let himself be PARTICIPLE). Consider also the following examples:

(12) *Harry*   *blev*   *gärna*   *opererad*.
　　　 Harry   became   willingly   operated
　　　 'Harry willingly underwent surgery.'

(13) *Harry*   *operera-de-s*   *gärna*.
　　　 Harry   operated-PAST-PASS   willingly
　　　 'The surgeons willingly operated on Harry.'

It has also been demonstrated that this use of *bli*-passive in Swedish is quite different from the use of *bli*-passive in the closely related Danish and Norwegian, where it is the default passive construction in the past tense and where it does not prefer animate subjects (Laanemets 2012). This difference in use must have arisen in the individual histories of these languages and is also a subject worthy of a separate study.

The original auxiliary *varda* is found in Modern Swedish mainly in lexicalized constructions; the use has a regional, archaic, or jocular flavour (SAOB *varda*). Interestingly, it is found in colloquial speech in central and northern Sweden, where the preterite form *vart* sometimes supplants *blev* "became", the preterite of *bli* (ibid.).

In Old and Middle Swedish *varda* could be used as the future auxiliary; this use is no longer productive in Swedish. However, it does appear as the passive auxiliary – SAOB cites relatively modern examples, e.g.:

(14) *Han **vart** <u>kallad</u> tillbaka, fast han var död.* (Ivar Lo-Johansson 1936, after SAOB)
'He **was** <u>recalled</u> though he was dead.'

2. Objective, material, and method

The **aim** of the paper is to present the formation of the *bli*-passive in Swedish. The process involves a gradual coalescence of two verbs, *varþa* and *bliva*, in a number of constructions, of which the analytical passive is one. The combination of the verb *varþa* and past participle was most likely a passive construction in 1300, though it has also been suggested that it could have been an aspectual one, possibly with future reference (Propst 2001; Toyota 2009). Furthermore, in its passive uses the *varþa + participle* construction is in competition with the already well-formed morphological *s*-passive. We will not focus on the unclear nature of the original *varþa*, which in itself is a topic well-worthy of further investigation in the Swedish material available, nor on the competition between *varþa + participle* and the morphological *s*-passive, but rather concentrate on the gradual replacement of *varþa* by *bliva*. The paper looks to discuss the following issues:

1. *remain*-verbs seldom grammaticalize into passive auxiliaries, so what what are the prerequisites for the process to be initiated?

2. In what constructions is the grammaticalization process most likely to start and how does it proceed?

We will argue that the impulse for grammaticalization is the coalescence with the become-verb, i.e. *varþa*, resulting in a polysemous meaning of the original *bliva*. We will further show that the original contexts for grammaticalization involve a combination of locative adverbials and participles and the first passive uses of *bliva* are connected with adversative verbs and negated participles (Section 5). The study is based on a corpus of Old and Middle Swedish (1330–1680) texts, including the prosaic genres typical for this period, i.e. legal, religious, and profane prose (Section 4).

The **material** used in the present study includes 11 Swedish texts, spanning 350 years, from 1330 to 1680. The texts were grouped into three periods: Period I (1330–1450), Period II (1450–1530), and Period III (1530–1680). The history of the Swedish language is usually subdivided into two major periods: Old Swedish 1225–1526 (*fornsvenska*) and Modern Swedish 1526–1900 (*nysvenska*), with additional dividing lines set at 1375 and 1732, however, in diachronic studies it has become customary to subdivide the Old Swedish period into three: 1225–1350, 1350–1450, 1450–1526 (see e.g., Delsing 2014; Skrzypek 2018). In our study we begin with the first attestations of *bli* ca. 1330 and end with texts where the use of the verb is similar to the modern grammar, dated at 1680. We have decided to use the 1450 as a division, since the time 1350–1450 has been shown to be the time of considerable change in the grammar of the Swedish language (e.g., Delsing 2014; Skrzypek 2012). *Historia Trojana* (= Troj) is traditionally considered an Old Swedish text, despite having been written down three years after 1526 and we include it in our Period II.

Three texts, *Karl Magnus saga* (= KM), *Peder Månssons Läkebok 9* (= PM), and *Stratonice* by Urban Hiärne (= Hiarn) have been excerpted in their entirety, from other texts passages of corresponding length, ca. 10,500 words, were chosen. The material is ca. 126,000 words long and represents prosaic genres: religious and profane prose, and historical chronicles. The full list of sources with bibliographic information can be found in the References. By each authentic Swedish example the abbreviation of the source text name is given in parathesis, together with the proposed date of the text's

origin. Translations of the examples into English are my own, as are all the tables presented in the paper.

The texts are available in a digitalised form, allowing an easy excerption. The **tool** used in the present study was KWIC (downloadable from http://dep.chs.nihon-u.ac.jp/english_lang/tukamoto/kwic_e.html). Firstly, a simple search for all instances of *bli* and *varþa* was conducted (Table 2). The results were then sorted manually according to the construction, in which each verb was found (Table 3).

The **method** is couched in the grammaticalization theory. The view of language change of the type studied here is mainly as a shift from a lexical to a grammatical use, or from less to more grammatical use (for a useful and comprehensive overview see The Oxford handbook… 2011). The case of the verb *bli* is an instance of the former type of change, with a lexical item becoming a grammatical one, i.e. a lexical verb turning into a passive auxiliary.

Passive morphology originates in lexical items that are grammaticalized into passive markers alongside more or less universal paths of grammaticalization. Haspelmath (1990) identifies four sources of passive markers: inactive auxiliaries, NP-reflexives, causatives, and generalized-subject constructions (ibid., 38). The Swedish passives represent the first two groups: the *bli*-passive has evolved out of the lexical verb *bliva* "remain" combined with a past participle, while the *s*-passive was originally a reflexive. To study passive morphology diachronically one needs to show how other uses of passive markers differ from the passive ones. The Swedish *s*-passive derives from a reflexive pronoun and has most likely developed through an anticausative (medio-passive) use (see e.g., Óttosson 1992 on closely related Icelandic). The periphrastic *bli*-passive may have gone through a resultative construction stage (Haspelmath 1990: 54). However, the problem with a periphrastic passive is that at the early stages of development it could have been a tense-aspectual rather than a passive construction (see Toyota 2009). At the time of the grammaticalization of the verbs *varþa* and *bliva* into passive auxiliaries, other auxiliaries underwent grammaticalization processes,

notably *vara* "be" and *hava* "have", which have resulted in perfective constructions (have + PARTICIPLE) or resultative ones (be + PARTICIPLE). In the present paper we leave these matters aside.

The **novelty** of the present study comes from the textual data that has as yet been unstudied despite the case of *bli* being quoted in literature (e.g., Weiss 1982; Wiemer 2004) and in the methodological issue of analyzing a grammaticalization process that involves substitution of one element for the other, which at the same grammaticalizations from a lexical verb to an auxiliary one. There is a clear interdependece between the two processes but what we hope to demonstrate in the present paper is which of the processes could have been the instigator of change.

Grammaticalization of passive auxiliaries has been the subject of a number of studies, in particular Gildea (2015), Schwarze (2003), Telve (2016), Toyota (2009), Weiss (1982), and Wiemer (2004 and 2011). The chain of grammaticalization proposed involves expansion of collocatability with predicative nominals to participles, which gradually lose their adjectival semantics (Wiemer 2011: 542). The final stage of the grammaticalization is the loss of erstwhile restrictions to participles of telic verbs and possibility to use the auxiliary with virtually any past participle.

In the present paper we will seek confirmation of the proposed model, however, bearing in mind that the grammaticalizing item, i.e. the verb *bli*, does not develop in the void. As we have mentioned above, by the time *bli* enters the Swedish lexicon and its grammaticalization is initiated, there already is a periphrastic passive or passive-like construction with the auxiliary *varþa*. To model this change we will need to consider both verbs and similarities between them.

3. General results

Table 2 presents general results of the study sorted into three periods; all instances of the verbs *bli* and *varþa* were excerpted.

Table 2. The Swedish sources: General results

Period	Texts	Total number of words	*bli* number of instances	*varþa* number of instances	sum	%
Period I (1330–1450)	Bur, KM, Jart, HML, SVM	64875	58	141	199	0.31
Period II (1450–1550)	SK, PM, Troj	28918	87	29	116	0.40
Period III (1550–1680)	Petri, Brahe, Hiarn, Speg	43415	232	87	319	0.73
Sum		**137208**	**377**	**257**	**634**	**0.46**

Since the verb *bli* substitutes and finally ousts the verb *varþa* as passive auxiliary, both verbs were excerpted. Taken together, the mean frequency of both is 0.46%, i.e. 4.6 per 1,000 words. Some texts, in particular from Period I, show values below the mean, while others, notably Petri and Brahe (from the beginning of Period III), show values almost thrice as high. We can further see that *bli* is attested in all texts, although with very low frequencies in the oldest two, Bur and KM. The frequencies show low values at the beginning, then a rise and a slight decline, the decline is followed by stabilization. We can further see how the low values for *bli* are compensated by high values for *varþa* and the other way round. *Varþa* is attested in each of the texts in the sample, apart from Hiarn.

All instances of *bli* were further grouped into four major groups:

- *bli* + locative adverbial (Example 15);
- *bli* + adverbial of manner or adjective (Examples 16 and 17);
- *bli* + predicative denoting function (Example 18);
- *bli* + participle (Example 19).

(15)   *Far þy niþir ii diupt hæluite ok **bliff** þær tel doma dagh.* (Bur 20, ca. 1330)
     'Descend into the deep hell and **remain** there until the day of judgement.'

(16) *Hedhne men äru swa marghe dödhe at aff hundradha hundradhom **bleeff** ängin <u>lifwandis</u>.* (KM 273)

'So many heathens were dead that of hundreds of hundreds none **remained** <u>alive</u>.'

(17) *[...] thaa **bliffwer** thz järnith <u>blöth</u> som bly.* (PM 417)

'[...] then the iron **becomes** <u>soft</u> as lead.'

(18) *Thå Valander dödher war **bleeff** hans son Visbur <u>konung</u>.* (Petri 21)

'When Valander died his son Visbur **became** <u>king</u>.'

(19) *Oc han skulle silffwer sedan **bliffwa** aff <u>satther</u> oc mystha riked.* (Troj 2)

'And he should **be** <u>deposed</u> himself and lose the kingdom.'

The results for each construction are given in Table 3 below. Since the values are low, we present numbers of instances in each grammatical structure rather than percentages. All uses of the verb *bli* that fall outside the typology proposed above were collected under the heading Other (they included mainly the use "arise" as in II in Modern Swedish, e.g., *Det blir nog regn* "There will probably be rain").

Table 3. Distribution of *bli* across functions in Old Swedish

Period	*bli* + locative adverbial	*bli* + adjective/ manner adverbial	*bli* + predicative denoting function	*bli* + participle	other
Period I (1330-1450)	35	18	0	4	0
Period II (1450-1550)	28	40	5	14	4
Period III (1550-1680)	10	47	21	152	16
Sum	**73**	**105**	**26**	**170**	**20**

We saw in Table 2 that the frequency of *bli* gradually rises from ca. 11.6 in period I to 63.67 in period III. In Table 3 we can further see that there are large discrepancies between the texts in each period, too. We can see that while there are few examples of *bli* in other uses than with locative adverbials and manner adverbials in Period I, while from Period II onwards the percentage of uses of *bli* with participle steadily rises and the locative use declines.

The data obtained from the text sample show that the original meaning of the verb *bli* was "to remain", and in this meaning the verb appears in all the texts chosen for the study. It is the only meaning, in which the verb is used in the oldest text in the sample, *Codex Bureanus* from ca. 1330.

4. Detailed results and discussion

In this chapter we present a detailed account of the uses of *bli* in the text sample. They are subdivided into the four major categories presented above and discussed separately, with relevant examples.

4.1 bli + locative adverbial

The use of *bli* with locative adverbials is the main use of the verb in period I (1330–1450). It is the only use found in the oldest text in the sample (Bur, ca. 1330) and it is the most frequent one in other texts in this period.

(20)   *Han bidhir thic mykit at han maghe än **bliua** i sällanom twa dagha älla thre.*
       (HML 217, ca. 1385)
       'He asks your permission to **remain** <u>in the cell</u> for two or three days.'

In period II (1450-1530) other uses of *bli* gain in frequency, however in the oldest text in the period, *Själens kloster* (= SK), still almost half of the examples of *bli* (6 out of 13) include locative adverbials, and *bli* is used clearly denoting "remain", as illustrated below (21):

(21) *Oc thu closter iomffru, war oc **bliff** idkelika <u>i thinom cella</u>*. (SK 59)

'And you, nun, be and **remain** perpetually <u>in your cell</u>.'

A possible bridging context (in the sense of Heine 2002) is given in Example (22), where the locative is followed by a participle *innelykket* (of the transitive *innelykta* "confine, lock up").

(22) *För thy enghen **bliffwer** <u>i cellan jnnelykket</u> jn til dödhen, wtan han är wt waldher*. (SK 60)

'For this reason nobody **remains** <u>locked in the cell</u> unless he is chosen.'

Of the texts chosen from this period, *Peder Månssons läkekonst* (= PM) has the highest frequency of the verb *bliva*, with only three instances of *varþa* (the shortest text in the sample, it was excerpted in its entirety). There are 17 examples of *bli* with a locative adverbial, however, as many as 15 of them include the particle *ater* (Modern Swedish *åter* "again, back"), in Modern Swedish found in *återstå* "remain" or exchanged for *kvar* "left, remaining" in the expression *bli kvar*. It seems that the use of *bli* as "remain" is no longer the only one possible and when reading "remain" is intented, the author clarifies this by adding the particle. This is illustrated by examples below.

(23) *Sidan blanda thz samma distillerada wathnith mz the som **atherbleff** <u>j glaseno</u>*. (PM 414)

'Then mix the same distilled water with what **remained** <u>in the glass</u>.'

(24) *[...] oc thz som **bliffwer ather** <u>pa bothnenom</u> kallas quinta essentia sulfuris*. (PM 429)

'[...] and what **remains** <u>on the bottom</u> is called the quintessence of sulphur.'

Similarly, in Troj we find examples where *bli* is accompanied by the particle *kvar*.

(25)   *Saa mage j som hr **bliffwen** <u>qwarre wiid stranden</u> skicke edert folk j tree.* (Troj 27)

'So may you who **remained** <u>here on the beach </u>send your men in three armies.'

Although *bli* is used with locative adverbials in each of the texts from period III (1530–1680), the examples (26-27), the use is less and less frequent until becoming marginal and the locative adverbials more metaphoric than concrete, as can be seen in the example (28) below.

(26)   *[...] men Måns Nielsson dristade icke **bliffua** <u>hema wid sin gård</u>.* (Brahe 4)

'[...] but Måns Nielsson did not want to **remain** <u>home in his farm</u>.'

(27)   *Och alltså **bleef** Celadon <u>uthi Epheso</u>.* (Hiarn 6)

'And thus Celadon **stayed** <u>outside Ephesus</u>.'

(28)   *Doch läät han Scåne **bliffua** <u>vnder Swerige</u>, och satte ther öffuer en sin skyldman aff Norige.* (Petri 25)

'Yet he let Scania to **remain** <u>as part of Sweden</u> and placed one of his relatives from Norway (to rule) there.'

Bli is used with the particle *kvar* in Hiarn and there is only one locative use in Speg, the youngest text in the sample. In Modern Swedish this use has become as good as obsolete, or is at least strongly marked as archaic (see SAOB). This is the only use of *bli*, in which the intended meaning must have been "to remain", the source meaning. It is also the one at odds with the target meaning "to become" and this may have been the reason why it was as good as lost in Modern Swedish.

4.2 bli + predicative

In period I (1330–1450) *bli* with the locative adverbial is the most frequent use of the verb. Of other uses of *bli*, the majority can still be understood as "remain" due to the context, some examples are given below.

(29) *Hedhne men äru swa marghe dödhe at aff hundradha hundradhom* **bleeff**
ängin <u>*lifwandis*</u>. (KM 273)
'So many heathens died that of hundreds of hundreds none **remained** <u>alive</u>.'

(30) *Än han* **bläf** *staþughir. hällir viliande dö än lyþa diäflomen*. (HML 187)
'But he **remained** faithful, wanting rather to die than to obey the devils.'

(31) *Jomfrun lydde hanom. oc* **bliw** *langan tima saman i renlifue*. (HML 199)
'The virgin obeyed him and they **stayed** together in celibacy for a long time.'

The most common adjectives used with *bli* are *stadughir* "faithful" (see Example 30 above) and *dödher* "dead". The latter use seems to be modelled on the Middle Low German one (see Example 3 above).

(32) *Thy war thz ey vnder thz then vsle mannen* **bleff** <u>*dödher*</u> *fore sina gire som han haffdhe badhe til silff oc gull*. (SVM 142)
'It was therefore no wonder that the bad man **remained** <u>dead</u> as a punishment for his greed of gold and silver.'

(33) Ok ginstan han kom vt a kyrkio gardhen mz mere folkino tha *wardh han gripin aff diäflinom* ok **bleff** <u>dödhir</u>. (Jart 28)
'And immediately he left the churchyard, followed by more people, *he was than taken* by the devils and **remained** <u>dead</u>.'

There is nothing in the wider context that should favour the reading "become dead" rather than "remain dead", but nor is there anything to make such a reading impossible. In fact, the combination of the verb *varþa* and adjective "dead" or a corresponding adversative participle (e.g., *killed*, *hurt*, *betrayed*) is frequently attested in Runic inscriptions from ca. 800 onwards (Examples (34-35) below) and in the oldest Swedish text written in Latin alphabet, *Äldre Västgötalagen* (= VgL, ca. 1225, Example 36).

(34) *Þiuþreiþr reisþi stein þisa eftiR biurn buta sin aR **uarþ** hauin.* (ca. 900)
      'Tjudred raised this stone to the memory of her husband who **was** <u>killed</u>.'

(35) *Han **uarþ** <u>tauþr</u> ą suąþiauþu.* (ca. 950)
      'He **was** <u>dead</u> in Svealand.'

(36) ***Uarþær** lekæri <u>barþær</u> þæt skal e vgilt uaræ.* (ca. 1225)
      Becomes fool <u>hit/hurt</u> it shall unpaid be.
      'Hurting a fool is not punishable.'

In the Runic Swedish material the verb *varþa* appears most often with participles formed from adversative verbs (see also Propst 2001: 229), although this may merely be an effect of the genre – the majority of the inscriptions are carved in the memory of a dead person, and many state where or how he or she died, thus the most frequent adjective with *varþa* is *död* "dead" and he most frequent participle is *drepinn* "killed". Other verbs attested include the adversative *svika* "disappoint, betray".

(37) *Han **uarþ** <u>suikuin</u>.* (ca. 1100)
      'He **was** <u>betrayed</u>.'

The use of *bli* with the adjective "dead" is therefore a potential bridging context (in the sense of Heine 2002) between the pure "remain" reading of *bli* and its polysemous character where it acquires the meaning "become".

In period II (1450–1530) the first uses of *bli* denoting "become" may be found. Admittedly, some contrast between *bli* and *varþa* must have still existed, but both can appear in the same clause, as illustrated by the example below (38):

(38) *Renlikheten är the dygdh, hwilken ensam i tässo dödheliko liffwe bewisar oc*
      ther odödhelika äronna stadgha, hon är the wällustande balsama smöriilse, mz

*hwilkom wara kroppa smordhe, <u>orötelika</u> **wardha** oc **bliffwa**.* (SKl 73, ca. 1500)

'Purity is this virtue which alone can constitute immortal glory in this mortal life; she is the fragrant balsamic ointment which when oiled onto our bodies makes them **become** and **remain** <u>unputrescent</u>.'

Even though the natural reading of *bli* in the example above (38) is "to remain", it should be noted that such reading must extend to *varþa*. This would imply that the two verbs were indeed in the process of coalescence. In the examples below (39 and 40) we see *bli* used as *varþa* would have been, meaning "to become".

(39)   *[...] gambla **bliffwa** <u>wnge</u>.* (Troj 10, ca. 1529)
      '[...] the old **become** <u>young</u>.'

(40)   *Jtem släkker tw järn manga resor j hwith win, oc sidan släkker ther j smälth bly, tha **bliffwer** blydh <u>harth</u>.* (PM 417)
      'Thus quench iron many times in white wine and then quench molted lead in the same wine and the lead will **become** <u>hard</u>.'

In these examples, there is a contrast between the state before and after some action was taken and executed: old vs young, molten vs hard.

The reading "to become" is also clear in examples with predicatives denoting functions, as in (41).

(41)   *[...] til ath **bliffwa** <u>hans drotning</u>.* (Troj 34)
      '[...] in order to **become** <u>his queen</u>.'

We have seen in discussion on *bli* with locative adverbials how the author of PM has reinforced the verb with particle *ater* (see Examples 23-24), which may imply that for

him the reading "remain" was not the dominant one of *bli*. A number of examples with predicatives found in the text suggest the reading "to become" rather than "to remain".

(42)   *[...] oc snarlika **bliffwer** <u>som eth smör</u>.* (PM 416)
       '[...] and soon **becomes** (smooth) <u>as butter</u>.'

(43)   *[...] oc säth j starkan solennas hitha oc aff järneno **bliffwer** <u>saffran</u>.* (PM 429)
       '[...] and place the iron in the heat of the Sun and the iron will **become** (=turn into) <u>saffron</u>.'

We can also find uses of *bli* denoting "come to pass, happen" (compare meaning II in Modern Swedish). Such uses are not passive, but they are impersonal.

(44)   *Tha **bleff** <u>stort slag</u> oppa nyth [...] tha størtte manga troyaner.* (Troj 28)
       '<u>A great battle</u> **became** (=took place) again [...] many Trojans fell then.'

In period III (1550–1680) the majority of uses with predicative are with those denoting functions. It seems that, for some authors at least, *bli* and *varþa* are fully interchangeable in this construction, as illustrated by the following examples.

(45)   *Thå Attil dödher war, **bleff** Digner <u>konung</u>, och epter hans dödh **wardt** Dagher <u>konung</u> i Swerige.* (Petri 23)
       'When Attil died, Digner **became** <u>king</u> and after his death, Dagher **became** <u>king</u> in Sweden.'

For examples with adjectival predicatives the reading "to become" seems the most natural.

(46)   ***Bleffve*** *belätet intet <u>lijkt</u>, så vore hans anseende, som han medh så stoor möda förskaffad sigh, om intet.* (Hiarn 20)

'If the likeness **became** (=was) not <u>like</u> enough, his reputation would suffer,
the reputation he took great pains to build.'

4.3 bli + participle

At the earliest stages of grammaticalization the frequencies of *bli* are low and (with the exception of HML) are also much lower than the frequencies of *varþa* (see Table 2). The meaning "to remain" is clearly prevalent. It is seen not only in the original uses with locative adverbials, but also in the early uses of the verb with participles, as in the examples below (47-49). Observe that in the oldest text in the sample, in which *bli* with participles has been found, the participles are all negated (with a prefix *o-*, denoting negation).

(47) *Ok thäs vphängda manzsens likame **bleff** <u>orutin</u> ok vtan onda lokt thre wiku.*
(Jart 22, ca. 1385)
'And the body of the hanged man **remained** <u>unrotten</u> and free of foul smell for three weeks.'

(48) *Oc swa hände at thän som korsit bar **bleff** <u>oskaddir</u>, ok han som thz andwardhadhe fran sik **wardh** <u>skutin</u> ok bleff dödhir.* (Jart 49)
'And it so happened that he who carried the cross **remained** <u>unhurt</u> and he who refused to carry it **was** <u>shot</u> and dead.'

(49) *Tha **wardher** iak <u>fräls</u> aff dödh [oc i **bliffwin**] <u>ofordärffwadhe</u>.* (SVM 114)
'And then I **was** <u>saved</u> from death and you **remain** <u>unspoilt</u>.'

Note how in the examples above (48 and 49) the text fluctuates between the two auxiliaries *bli* and *varþa*: *bli* is used with a participle denoting no change of state (the negative prefix *o*: *oskaddir* "unhurt" and *ofordärffawadh*-e "unspoilt-PL", both verbs are intransitive), while *varþa* is used with a participle formed from a perfective verb denoting change of state (*skutin* "shot" and *fräls* "saved"). Had the meaning of both

been the same we would expect only one to be used and only once, with ellipsis of the second instance (Menzel 2016).

A further argument in favour of reading all instances of *bli* as "to remain" is the fact that there were no uses with a predicate denoting function (of the type "become king") found in the texts chosen from that period.

Things change in Period II (1450–1530) when we find first examples of *bli* with past participles denoting change of state. There are none in the oldest text from this period, SK, in which only one example with participle has been found, similar to Period I example, i.e. with a negative prefix.

(50)　*Swa räknar han all war fiäth, at ey aldra mindsta tankana, ey minzsta oc lösasta ordhet, huilken wi för enkte hallom, skulu **bliffwa** oransakat i hans stranga dome.* (SK 30)
'He counts each step we take so that not the smallest thoughts nor the smallest words which to us mean nothing should **remain** un-examined in his severe doom.'

However, the remaining texts all show examples of participles from transitive verbs, and used as in Modern Swedish.

(51)　*[...] oc han skulle silffwer sedan **bliffwa** aff satther oc mystha riked.* (Troj 2)
'[...] and he himself would later **become** deposited and lose the kingdom.'

(52)　*[...] oc oppa thz at wij matthom seger winnara wara offwer wara fiender at wij nw strax for dagen kommer oc foren wij **bliffwom** bespeyada.* (Troj 26)
'[...] and so that we may be the winners over our enemies we come before daylight, before we **are** spied upon.'

We also find first examples of agentive phrases, the appearance of which is a clear mark of the passive nature of the construction.

(53) *Hercules **bleff** fängneliga <u>anamad</u> aff konung thelamon.* (Troj 24)

   'Hercules **was** <u>received</u> by king Thelamon with joy.'

The growing frequency of the agentive phrases is a hallmark of the grammaticalization of the verb *bli* into passive auxiliary (see also Haspelmath 1990: 56). In Modern Swedish the default agentive phrase is *av* X "by X"; in the texts studied the agentive phrases could also be constructed with the preposition *igenom* "through, by". In the six older texts in the sample (Bur, HML, Jart, KM, SK, SVM) no agentive phrases were found with the verb *bli*. In the younger texts, the frequency of the agentive phrases rises steadily, which is illustrated in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Frequency of agentive phrases with *bli* in Swedish

Text	Number of agentive phrases	% of *bli* with agentive phrases
Troj	2	8.00%
Petri	2	3.80%
Brahe	7	6.10%
Hiarn	2	6.70%
Speg	7	20.00%

In Period III, the use of *bli* with participles is the most frequent one (152 instances vs. 14 in Period II and only 4 in Period I).

(54) *Men gör han thet som ondt är, så **bliffuer** han <u>straffat</u> så wel medt eth ont ryckte som altt annat, som Gudh honom på lägger.* (Petri 17)

   'But if he does what is wrong, he **will be** <u>punished</u> with bad reputation as well as everything else that God will lay upon him.'

Before we conclude this section, we will briefly show how the original passive auxiliary, *varþa*, is represented in the texts studied.

*4.4 The verb **varþa** in the corpus*

In Periods I-III *varþa* is used with predicatives, both adjectives (Examples 55-56) and predicates denoting functions (57-59), and with participles (60-61). There are no uses corresponding to the locative *bli*, since *varþa* denoted only "become" and not "remain".

(55) *Guþ giuar iþar goþa dotor hæna nampn skal vara maria hon skal <u>hælagh</u> **warþa** i moþor liue ok siþan.* (Bur 4, ca. 1330)

'God gives you a good daughter. Her name shall be Mary. She will **be** <u>holy</u> in her mother's womb and later.'

(56) *Ok tha **wardher** kesarin swa <u>rädder</u> at han far oppa thz höxsta tornith som i borghinne är.* (KM 257, ca 1380)

'And the emperor **became** so <u>scared</u> that he leapt on the highest tower in the castle.'

(57) *Habraam husfru fic sit førsta barn gamul kærlingh þa han hafþe liuat. xc ar ok **warþ** ysaac <u>patriarca</u>.* (Bur 4, ca. 1330)

'Abraham's wife had her first child as an old woman when he had lived forty years and Isaac **became** a <u>patriarch</u>.'

(58) *[...] oc fiol a siin knä for honum oc thakkadhe honum at watnith war bort gangith oc **wardh** <u>hans man</u>.* (KM 263)

'[...] and he fell on his knee before him, thanked him for removing the water and **became** <u>his man</u>.'

(59) *Hwat ey for mat þw nw **varþa** <u>renliuis man</u>. siþan þw äst mättir aff alle orenlikhet.* (HML 186)

'You may not **become** <u>a virtuous man</u> as long as you are full of sin.'

(60) *Santillus **varþ** <u>gripin</u> ii hans staþ ok dømdar vndi suœrþ*. (Bur 57)

'Santillus **was** <u>seized</u> in his town and convicted under sword.'

(61) *Aldre skal min frände **wardha** <u>lastadher</u> fore mina skuld*. (KM 268)

'Never shall my relative **be** <u>burdened</u> by me.'

There is no change in the scope of use of *varþa* in the studied material, rather the frequency of the verb is gradually lower with each period in favour of the higher frequency of *bli* (see Table 2).

In his study of the origins of *bli*-passive in North Germanic, Propst (2001) states that the original construction with the verb *varþa* was used as a mutative passive (denoting a transition from one state to another, see also de Knop 2016), and also that participles of adversative verbs (denoting actions with unpleasant or undesirable results) were more frequent. In his study he gives examples from the Old Norse translation from French (Strengleikar, ca. 1250) and translation from French to Old Swedish (Ivan Lejonriddaren, ca. 1300). The Swedish text does not exhibit the same restrictions as the Old Norse one, which the author explains with the discrepancy in their ages (the Swedish text is at least fifty years younger). Nor should we disregard the fact that the two texts represent what by that time have become two separate languages. Nevertheless, the origins of the *varþa*-passive may well lie in an adversative serial-verb construction.

In the process of grammaticalization, an adversative serial verb such as "suffer" first becomes the grammaticalized marker of an adversative passive, as in Mandarin Chinese, Japanese, Thai, or Vietnamese. Such a construction may eventually expand its functional scope to become a generalized passive, as in Mandarin (Givón 2006: 339).

This affinity between adversative verbs and passivization, at least at the early stages of grammaticalization, is indeed captured by the name of the category itself (Latin *passivum* is derived from *pati* "suffer", see also Haspelmath 1990).

4.5 Animacy of the subject with participles

It has been noted that animacy of the subject of a passive clause is an important factor in the choice of a passive construction in Modern Swedish (Engdahl 1999). We have therefore completed our excerption with a study of the animacy of the subjects in the material. We have only considered uses of *bli* with participles, therefore texts where such uses were not found are not included in the results. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Animacy of the subject with *bli*-passive in Old and Middle Swedish

Period	Subject inanimate	Subject animate
Period I (1330–1450)	3	2
Period II (1450–1550)	2	2
Period III (1550–1680)	50	91

The results show that apart from two texts, Jart and PM, the animate (and human) subjects constitute the majority of subjects in clauses with *bli* and participle. The results for Jart, PM, SK, and SVM, the four oldest texts reported here, are not very informative due to the low number of examples in each. The results for Brahe, Hiarn, Petri, and Speg, Period III texts, are more reliable, and all show that the animate subjects make up at least 60% of all subjects. However, inanimate subjects with *bli*-passive can also be found, as in the examples below (62 and 63):

(62) **Blef** <u>refererat</u>, *at Kungen i Danmark sampt medh Printz Jörgen och Hertigen af Plön wore reeste åt Köpenhampn.* (Speg 36)

'It **was** <u>reported</u> that the king in Denmark travelled to Copenhagen together with Prince Jörgen and the earl of Plön.'

(63) *[...] och bräditt **bleff** <u>wpsatt</u> på ehn ganska höij stacke*. (Brahe 6)

'[...] and the plank **was** <u>placed</u> on a quite high stack.'

5. Concluding remarks

At the beginning of our paper we have posed two questions concerning the history of the *bli*-passive in Swedish:

1. Given that *remain*-verbs seldom grammaticalize into passive auxiliaries, what are the prerequisites for the process to be initiated?

2. In what constructions is the grammaticalization process most likely to start and how does it proceed?

The material gathered for our study has allowed us to follow the development of the lexical *bliva* "remain" into passive auxiliary *bli* in Old and Middle Swedish. The data show that the prerequisite for the grammaticalization to be initiated is a polysemous nature of the verb, which no longer only denotes "remain" but "become" as well. As long as the verb could only be used in the meaning "remain", it did not occur with predicatives denoting functions (e.g., *king*), a use, which constitutes a bridge between the lexical and the grammatical use of the verb, gradually allowing it to appear with past participles denoting change of state. It can be claimed that the polysemy arises in period II (1450–1550), which is illustrated by the fact that the uses of the verb *bliva* in the meaning "remain" are often strengthened with locative particles such as *ater* or *kvar*, as if the original meaning was no longer unequivocal. In this period *bliva* appears in two new constructions, in which only *varþa* was found in earlier texts, namely with predicatives denoting functions and in impersonal constructions "there happened/took place" (see Chapter 3, Example 10 and Chapter 5, Example 44). These uses seem to predate the constructions, in which *bliva* ousts *varþa* as passive auxiliary and appears with past participles.

An influence from Middle Low German cannot be excluded, although no studies show unequivocally that the verb *bliven* had any auxiliary potential in Middle Low German,

before it was borrowed in Swedish. Also, the results of the present study suggest that the early occurrences of the verb in Swedish were limited to the purely lexical uses in the meaning "to remain", and the polysemy with "to become", which led to the grammaticalization, arose first in Swedish and was not part of the meaning of the verb in Middle Low German.

As is the case with most linguistic change, we cannot be certain as to what caused this development. One potential bridging context is the frequently employed phrase *bliva dödher* "remain dead", which, though in itself most likely not denoting any change of state, could have been confused with equally frequent and well-attested phrase *varþa dödher* "become dead". This particular phrase is named in SAOB. However, it is equally likely that the bridging context was constituted by constructions, in which more than one adverbial appears, i.e. a locative and a manner adverbial, as in "in the cell confined" (Example 22). Furthermore, the early examples with participles with negative prefixes (Examples 47-50) may have also constituted a bridging or even a switch context for grammaticalization of the passive auxiliary – the subject of the clause is an object of some action, even though it remains unchanged by this action. Nevertheless, the subject can be construed as a patient. This is not to say that the development from this point is inevitable, since such structures are perfectly acceptable in English, without, apparently, giving rise to passive readings.

List of abbreviations

Brahe – Per Brahe

Bur – Codex Bureanus

C – common gender

DEF – definite

Hiarn – Urban Hiärne: Stratonice

HML – Helga manna lefverne

Jart – Järteckensboken

KM – Karl Magnus

KWIC – key word in context

N – neuter gender

NP – noun phrase

PASS – passive

Petri – Olavus Petri

PL – plural

PM – Peder Månssons Läkebok 9

SAOB – Svenska akademiens ordbok

SG – singular

SK – Själens kloster

Speg – Haqvin Spegel

SVM – Sju vise mästare

Troj – Historia Trojana

WALS – World atlas of language structures

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Resumé

Modern Swedish is a language with two passives: morphological *s*-passive and periphrastic *bli*-passive, formed with the auxiliary *bli* and a past participle. The auxiliary is a Middle Low German loanword in Swedish with the first attestation ca. 1300, originally meaning "remain". At the time when the verb was borrowed, there already was a periphrastic passive constructed with the auxiliary *varþa* "become". The aim of the paper is to study the substitution of *bli* for *varþa* as passive auxiliary and to identify the bridging contexts, which facilitated this substitution. In particular, the paper seeks to answer the question of how the process is initiated. The sources include 11 Swedish texts (ca. 126.000 words), spanning 350 years, from 1330 to 1680, representing religious and profane prose and historical chronicles. The data show that the prerequisite for grammaticalization to be initiated is a polysemous nature of *bli*, which no longer only denotes "remain" but "become" as well. It is claimed here that polysemy arises around 1450–1550, which is illustrated by the fact that the "remain"-uses of the verb *bliva* are often strengthened with locative particles, suggesting the original meaning was no longer transparent and that the verb could be used with predicatives denoting function, e.g., *king*. Having acquired the additional meaning of "to become", *bli* comes to be used with participles, to begin with only negated ones, denoting no change of state, while *varþa* continues to be used with participles formed from verbs denoting change of state. The negated participles constitute a bridging

context, since once the negation was separated from the participle, the verb *bli* could be understood as a passive auxiliary. By 1680 bli appears in all contexts previously reserved for *varþa*, the frequency of which declines resulting in its loss in Modern Swedish.