

Giovanni Bellucci
**Research on Swedish Humanized Modernization,
 or the *acceptera* “Case”**

Editor: *Eugenio Lux*
 Title: *acceptera*
 Language of the text: *Italian*
 Publisher: *LetteraVentidue*
 Characteristics: *16,5x24 cm, 284 pages, paperback, black and white*
 ISBN: *978-88-6242-979-5*
 Year: *2024*



Nearly a century after its publication in Sweden in 1931, *acceptera*, an emblematic text of the Functionalist movement which, during those years, gained widespread and immediate support throughout the Nordic countries, is translated into Italian for the first time. The editor Eugenio Lux, here also acting as translator, thus contributes to the dissemination in Italy of a publication still considered seminal by scholars of contemporary architectural history. The volume, published by LetteraVentidue, also has the merit of having adopted a facsimile format that fully conveys the thought of the authors (the architects Gunnar Asplund, Wolter Gahn, Sven Markelius, Eskil Sundahl, Uno Åhrén and the art historian Gregor Paulsson), also through a significant iconographic apparatus comprising dozens of images and drawings. The volume opens with the brief preface by Marco Biraghi followed by the introduction by Eugenio Lux (both numbered separately from the main text), which lead into the core of the volume with the 201 pages of the translation. The editorial work is concluded by the afterword by Luca Ortelli and a rich appendix, again edited by Lux, which includes a set of notes useful for a more detailed reading of the cultural and historical references of *acceptera*, the contextualisation of part of the images, a bibliography extending to an international panorama and, not least, biographical profiles of the six authors.

The volume is linked to the celebrated *Stockholmsutställningen* (Stockholm Exhibition), curated by the same authors of *acceptera* in the summer of 1930, and with respect to which it constitutes an effective theoretical and pedagogical clarification. As Biraghi and Ortelli observe in their texts, the book has the ambition of communicating effectively and of not trivialising the meaning of the Functionalist revolution, seeking above all to broaden the readership beyond architects, thus not focusing attention on merely technical issues or exclusively on the questions most dear to the Modern Movement (first and foremost housing). Broadening the thematic spectrum by foregrounding social and ethical aspects considered by the authors indispensable for consolidating a genuine revolution, not only architectural but also cultural, thus

effectively substantiates the ambition envisaged by the protagonists of Swedish Modernism. *acceptera* therefore addresses a variety of themes preparatory to those more strictly pertaining to research on architectural language (among these, in particular, the Swedish cultural and social context, standardisation, the relationship between industry and craftsmanship, as well as the relationship between the new and the old, the structure of the modern city and its relationship with antiquity, various aspects relating to the theme of the house and dwelling, etc.), which culminate in the concluding act, with the invitation made by the authors in the final chapter to “... accept present reality”, not to “... escape from our own time”, stressing that “Those who do not wish to accept will not be able to collaborate in the development of culture. They will sink into an insignificant position of bitter heroism or worldly scepticism”.

In the introduction to the volume (pp. XI–XLII), Eugenio Lux guides us through the reading and examination of some of its distinctive features, particularly those expressed through images which also refer to geographical contexts beyond the Scandinavian one, to German and American architecture and theories of dwelling and building, especially in relation to the contacts developed by some of the authors and in particular by Sven Markelius, described by the editor as the most orthodox Functionalist of the group. These and many other themes, such as a hypothesis regarding the authorship of texts presented by the authors as the result of collective work and therefore never fully disclosed, as well as the graphic format chosen for the layout, find space in Lux’s research, which is useful in effectively and meticulously contextualising *acceptera* as an emblematic editorial and theoretical “case” of the twentieth century.