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Wheatley's chapter 17, called the "Urban Fabric", itself an encyclopedia of medieval Muslim history, traces in detail the thinking about the congregational mosque as the center of the Muslim community and all its activities, and how that was gradually diversified as different urban settings were encountered and assimilated into the new religious system. Throughout, Wheatley emphasizes that he has not discerned any "built environment that was paradigmatically Arabian. What was transmitted from al-Madinah was a style of government and a schedule of responsibilities." The majority of pre-Muslim cities encountered, perhaps 1200–1500 with "pretensions to urban status" ("Epilogue", p. 327), by the tenth century "...had generated a spectrum of urban morphologies the diversity of which subverts easy generalizations" (335). "By the ninth or tenth century, ...religion had come to contextualize virtually all perceptions and expectations of urban life, past, present and future" (p. 337).

This is by no means an easy book. Wheatley's insistence on the use of transliterated Arabic forms of place names and terms, necessary to a textual analysis such as he has furnished us here, does make for a formidable barrier even for someone knowledgeable about the debates concerning urban patterns in Muslim history. What he has achieved is the recreation of an atmosphere and environment of a world at a certain moment in its history, without essentializing it, insisting, in fact, on the diversity represented by the huge piece of the globe tackled by Maqdisi. Wheatley enriches the Maqdisi descriptions by drawing on anthropological, geopolitical, and ecological observations about the region available to a twentieth-century urban scholar. In sum, Wheatley has developed a monumental urban typology of an under-represented part of the world, a fitting testament to a scholar who spent his life on the social relations and ecology of Asia's cities.

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Le Fantasme métropolitain: l'architecture de Ross et Macdonald examines the impact of "economic rationalism" on the evolution of large buildings during the first four decades of the 20th century, and concurrently, determines how this architecture transformed the cores of Canadian cities. Author Jacques Lachapelle, a professor of architecture history and design at the Université de Montréal, illustrates his inquiry with a selection of buildings produced by Montreal-based architects Ross & Macdonald.

The Metropolitan Fantasy in the book's title refers to ideas of modernity that were linked to urban growth in North America prior to World War II. The Introduction explains how the conception of the city as a dynamic and progressive entity arose with accelerated industrial capitalism based on mass production and

consumption. Endorsing the vision of the modern metropolis, business leaders promoted buildings of ever-increasing scale, eventually engendering architectural commercial gigantism. It is Lachapelle's contention that these buildings were proto-modern, in that they laid the foundations for certain aspects of post-war modern architecture and urban planning.

Ross & Macdonald's extensive output of large, Beaux-arts inspired buildings provide ample material for the book's themes. Founded as Ross & MacFarlane in 1905 by George Allan Ross (1878–1946) and David H. MacFarlane (1875–1950), the firm changed its name in 1913 when Robert Henry Macdonald (1875–1942) replaced MacFarlane as partner. Modeled after highly productive New York offices such as Carrière & Hastings, with whom Ross had apprenticed, and George B. Post & Sons, with whom Macdonald had previously been employed, Ross & Macdonald prospered as one of the largest firms in Canada by the late 1920s. Their ability to execute huge projects with pragmatic efficiency greatly appealed to business contemporaries.

The sections in the first chapter on The Transformation of the City, the Fear of the Skyscraper, and the Compromise of Zoning outline the initial historical context. The synopsis recounts how in the early 1900s the civic-minded, but prohibitively costly, ideals of urban reformists and the City Beautiful Movement were deemed unattainable. To control explosive urban growth and curtail skyscraper construction (because of economic and health concerns), municipalities like Montreal followed the lead of New York City and enacted restrictive height and zoning regulations. However, the legislation did not discourage the proliferation of "block buildings" – large commercial structures that occupied multiple smaller city lots in broadening business districts.

The book's following three chapters trace the development of block building through Ross & Macdonald's office buildings and art deco skyscrapers, department stores, and hotels, respectively. Each section proceeds chronologically, analyzing the crucial developments in the plans and forms of specific buildings.

In the chapter on office buildings, the Transportation Building (by Carrière & Hastings with Ross & MacFarlane as associates, demolished) is pinpointed as the prototype Montreal block building. Constructed between 1909–12, it was important for a number of features, including its unprecedented size, integration of office space with commercial outlets, and accommodation of public spaces that were accessible by several street entrances. Capitalizing on these elements, however, took a while as Ross & Macdonald's office buildings of the twenties focused on minimalist, standardized designs determined primarily by economic efficiency tempered by Beaux-arts aesthetics. The potential of the Transportation Building was finally realized in the imposing Dominion Square Building (1928–40) in Montreal. This office-commercial complex, containing underground parking and an elegant two-level shopping concourse, is credited with paving the way for later large-scale, mixed-use projects.

Lachapelle's study of the department stores and grand hotels corresponds to the trends evident in office block buildings, with additional features designed to cater to a burgeoning consumer-

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oriented culture nation-wide. Ross & Macdonald's work for the T. Eaton Company included stores in Calgary and Saskatoon as well as the Toronto College St. Store (1928–30), with its opulent art deco interior, and the Montreal Store (1925–27), which, by 1931, had added Jacques Carlu's unique streamline modern restaurant. As for the hotels, the author does a masterful job chronicling the architect's impressive series of chateausque, metropolitan and skyscraper palaces for Canadian railway and American chain companies. A "city within a city," the gargantuan Royal York Hotel (1927–29) in Toronto, with the Dominion Square Building and the late Eaton's projects, substantiate the claim that block building interiors steadily appropriated earlier academic and urban planning ideals meant to create order, scale and harmony in metropolitan centres.

Although the continuity of Beaux-arts planning principles in post-war modern public architecture has already been noted by Harold Kalman, Lachapelle makes a strong case for the ongoing influence on current commercial city environments of large pre-1940s buildings. Colossal size, interior streets, segregated circulation routes, and a multi-functional autonomy that turned its back on the city resurfaced by the mid-sixties in mega-structures like Place Bonaventure in Montreal. Moreover, the idea of the interior shopping corridor has continued in the underground city, most fully realized and still growing in Montreal.

Considering its scope, it may seem detrimental that *Le Fantôme Métropolitain* is restricted to the work of one architectural firm operating in Montreal, especially when similar content has recently been covered in the 1998 Canadian Centre for Architecture (CCA) publication *Montreal Metropolis 1880–1930*. Yet the book succeeds in its focused scrutiny almost as a case study, and is held together by weaving the concepts around a taut analysis of the buildings. In summing up a predominant architectural phenomenon of the last century, the book is convincing and it would be unfortunate if it did not appear in an English-language edition.

As for its treatment of Ross & Macdonald, this slim volume is the most comprehensive study of the firm's work published to date. But it is hardly the definitive monograph since it concerns only a portion of their production. In this regard, the illustrations drawn from architectural magazines of the period are suitable. However, the contemporary color photos do not complement the text. Reproductions of drawings by Ross & Macdonald held in the CCA Archives would have indicated a more serious attempt to accurately represent this important Canadian firm.

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Monkkonen, Eric H. *Murder in New York City*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001. Pp. xii, 238. Black and white illustrations, tables, figures, index. US\$29.95 (cloth)

Eric Monkkonen's book on murder in New York is ambitious: an examination of two centuries of homicide in the largest American city, partly in order to answer the questions: "Are things get-

ting better or worse? And in either case, why?" An initial chapter outlines the general evolution of murder in New York since 1800; five chapters then discuss murder weapons and techniques, the effects of gender, age, and race/ethnicity, and the circumstances of murders, such as workplace and political violence; a concluding chapter compares New York City with Europe.

The book is actually two intertwined studies. The first, a statistical analysis of murder in New York (what he calls "the best long-run series on homicide ever constructed" (5)), concentrates largely on what can be extracted from official tabulations, such as the murder rate, the gender and race of perpetrators and the weapons used. Graphs and tables cover the entire two-century sweep, but unfortunately the analysis is largely a comparison of the nineteenth century and the last few decades of the twentieth, with scant attention paid to the intervening period. Nevertheless, Monkkonen does make some telling observations, both unsurprising and surprising. Thus, homicide rates in New York have consistently been several times higher than in European cities; however, there has been no smooth progression, with homicides peaking in the middle years of the nineteenth century and the last half of the twentieth and troughs around 1900 and 1950. Likewise, men have predominated both as aggressors and as victims; however, throughout most of its history, homicide in New York was the work of whites, not people of colour. Finally, while guns have played an increasingly central role in New York homicides, even without guns, New York would still be much more violent than European cities.

The second study is a detailed examination of murder in New York between 1800 and 1874, based on 1781 individual cases. Apart from providing examples to put human faces to the tables and graphs, the corpus allows Monkkonen to put more flesh on the statistical bones, though only for the nineteenth century. For example, inter-ethnic and inter-racial murders were uncommon; most men murdered within their own ethnic group. Murderers were overwhelmingly concentrated among men "in the prime of their lives", with very few youthful killers; since immigration and migration brought large numbers of men in their twenties and thirties to nineteenth-century New York, demographics may explain its high homicide rates as much as culture. Several cases show how contested uses of public space contributed to murderous situations. Finally, the complexity inherent in almost two thousand individual "microdramas" leads him to reject any simple explanation for homicide; as a result, he suggests that to address violence, all avenues should be explored, from gun control to "manners training". Overall, Monkkonen emphasizes American exceptionalism, which is explained by factors such as a weak and decentralized state, a lax justice system, and (somewhat tautologically) a significant cultural tolerance for violence.

From the perspective of urban history, perhaps Monkkonen's most contentious assertion (also made in *The Civilization of Crime* (1996)) is that cities in the past were less violent (and less criminalized) than the countryside. In *Murder in New York City*, this seems based largely on a comparison of American and New York City rates for the first half of the twentieth century. Apart from the problem of comparing New York City to the United States as a whole, rather than the North-East (since the