



Patrick Geddes

'No one who studies animate nature can get past the fact of beauty. It is as real as the force of gravity.'

Patrick Geddes and Sir J. Arthur Thomson, *Life: Outlines of General Biology* (1931)

Sir Patrick Geddes, polymathic Scottish planner and botanist, published *Cities in Evolution* in 1915. This seminal text argued that his touring Cities Exhibition constituted an exhaustive body of knowledge indispensable for good city and regional planning. The text also argued for a form of participatory civics that he described as applied sociology. Geddes (1854-1932) was trained as a botanist by Thomas Henry Huxley, and became a city planner by vocation. He designed the plan of central Tel Aviv in 1925. He was a mentor to Lewis Mumford (1895-1990), the American theorist of cities and technology. Geddes held the Chair of Botany at University College, Dundee (1888-1919) and the Chair of Sociology & Civics at University of Bombay (1919-1924). He coined the term *conurbation* for the way towns grow together into cities, advocated the practice of urban *surgery* to selectively re-articulate them, and emphasised the importance of the city region as the critical unit for planning.