

## STATEMENT OF CRISTINA GEDDO

2/7/08

From the start, this marvellous *Profile of a Young Woman* in a private collection struck me as an amazing, unpublished Leonardo da Vinci, and led me to exclude right away the alternative possibility that it might be from the artist's school. Leonardo's most talented pupils, among the most notable of whom are Marco d'Oggiono, Boltraffio and Gianpietrino, each have their own, quite recognizable personal style and they do not possess the subtlety of vision of the master. Nor are they left-handed.

In spite of the incontrovertible visual evidence shown by the *Profile*, the re-discovery of a new work by Leonardo, which, incredibly, has remained unknown for five centuries, seems so extraordinary an event as to be untrue. But such diffidence and suspicion have been allayed by the accurate examination of the work by means of multi-spectral digital photography, and other analyses, undertaken by "Lumière Technology". The degree of degeneration of the materials used and a fairly invasive old restoration, which inhibits a proper reading of the work, without however compromising it, exclude the eventuality that one is here dealing with a nineteenth-century fake. Moreover, the presence of numerous "pentiments" and the lack of any prototype confirm that this is an original work and not a copy from the early sixteenth century.

Having overcome these doubts, one can only suppose that Leonardo was the artist responsible for this work, a conclusion that is supported, in my opinion, by four fundamental arguments: the unequivocal character of the style and of the physiognomy; the unrivalled quality of the execution; the irrefutable evidence of the recurring, left-handed shading; and the selfsame experimental technique with which the portrait itself is realized.

The hair-do, with her hair braided into a single plait under her snood, besides the "Leonardesque knots" in the border of her dress, tie this work securely to Leonardo's first Milanese stay (1481/82-1499), in which the archaizing typology of the "heraldic" profile reveals a very different representational aim from that of contemporary portraiture in the Milanese court of the period of Ludovico il Moro.

For the time being the sitter's identity remains unknown. She is a woman of uncommon beauty, whose features are close to those of the Leonardesque canon and whose type oscillates between female profiles in naturalistic idealized portraiture.

The aspects of the work briefly summarized here have been treated at greater length in a soon-to-be-published study, concluded 11<sup>th</sup> June, 2008, where a more detailed reading of the work is presented, which, it is hoped, will prompt the opening of a debate about this extraordinary work.