

Leonardo

a female-to-male transgender individual



From the *Codex Atlanticus* in Milan, I have just discovered a self-portrait by Leonardo from c1500 confirming DNA analysis that shows he was a pioneering transsexual genius.

In 1863, during an excavation at the Château d'Amboise (where Leonardo died in 1519), French writer Arsène Houssaye uncovered bones, including a skull, and a lock of whitish/blond hair that came from Leonardo—from his beard or head. In 2019 for the 500th anniversary of Leonardo's death, the Italian researchers Alessandro Vezzosi (director of the Museo Ideale Leonardo da Vinci in Vinci) and Agnese Sabato announced they had located the lock in a private collection in the United States, was labelled "Les Cheveux de Leonardo da Vinci" (the French language for "Leonardo da Vinci's hair") and came with documents suggesting ancient French provenance. The lock was publicly displayed for the first time in May 2019 at the museum in Vinci, Leonardo's birthplace.

Plans were announced to perform DNA testing on it, compare it with living descendants of Leonardo's family, and match it against the bones in the Chapel of Saint-Hubert at Amboise. The Leonardo da Vinci DNA Project has focused on extracting DNA from other sources, such as swabs from attributed drawings or letters from relatives, rather than relying solely on this hair lock. They have now identified matching X-chromosome markers in the hair, showing that Leonardo was genetically female.

Recently, a self-portrait made about 1500 has come to light through my researches at the Biblioteca Ambrosiana (Pinacoteca Ambrosiana), Milan, Italy, home to *Codex Atlanticus*, the single largest collection of Leonardo's drawings and writings and containing over 1,100 sheets with ~1,700 drawings and notes on mechanics, anatomy, flight and weapons, etc. It was adherent to another sheet of parchment and had been overlooked by earlier scholars. It confirms a startling truth: Italy's greatest innovator was a woman.

Brian J. Ford