Two folios, two fragments of Leonardo’s limitless production, but just a few instants on a timeline that covers a period of forty years.

At an event called “Leonardo in Monsummano” organized by the Museo Ideale Leonardo Da Vinci on Saturday 27 April 2013, I addressed some issues concerning these two folios, among many other subjects, such as the sketches portraying Montalbano and Valdinievole and the so called “Leonardisms,” concerning the drawing dated 5 August 1473 (Fig. 25.1) and the paper coded as RL 12279 (Fig. 25.2), summarizing over forty years of research and re-discoveries carried out on the local territory, and pointing out the engaging theme of Leonardo’s mistakes. The agenda of the event also included a “message from Los Angeles” from Carlo Pedretti—who, having come back earlier than expected from California, instead, showed up in person.

The aforementioned event concerned the latest update of a work in progress started twenty years ago with the grand opening of the Museo Ideale, backed by some previous studies carried out in 1975. In that year, Pedretti gave a memorable lecture about the artist entitled “Etcetera perché la minestra si fredda,” relevant not only for its contents but also for the innovative method applied, which was far more efficient and interdisciplinary than the traditional one usually adopted by Leonardisti.

Pedretti has always been a source of continuous new discoveries, many of which have not yet been fully understood. “There is nothing more unedited than the printed media,” he keeps repeating. We should, therefore, all meditate about how adrift we are today, following the disbandment of the news and the misunderstandings caused by the World Wide Web.

In 1975, Pedretti signed for the first time, the guest book of “Strumenti memoria del territorio.” The following year, the publisher Renato Giunti entrusted me with the editing of the huge volume entitled “Leonardo: La pittura,” offering me the chance to cooperate with twenty scholars, and, in particular, with Carlo Pedretti and with Giulio Carlo Argan, who also wrote a truly peculiar and enlightening treatise concerning the drawing dated 5 August 1473. My own research—combining history, criticism, creativity, and anthropology—stems from the aforesaid sources and several fundamental lessons from which I could learn.
In 1979 to 1980 I was the curator of an exhibition held at the Museo Leonardiano in Vinci entitled “Leonardo e l’agricoltura” and of another entitled “La Toscana di Leonardo,” which generated quite a ridiculous debate concerning RL 12279, since some members of the local council mistook it for a simple doodle by a modern artist and didn’t acknowledge its real value as one of Leonardo’s masterpieces. The catalogue of the exhibition was not published until 1984, when Carlo Pedretti himself, with the collaboration of both Paolo Galluzzi and Marco Dezzi Bardeschi, decided to present it.