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In this issue:

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EDITORIAL

In recent years, climate change has had increasingly tangible effects on Italian river ecosystems. Rising average temperatures, decreasing rainfall, the increased frequency of extreme events, and the progressive tropicalization of the climate are profoundly altering freshwater habitats. In particular, sensitive fish species such as brown trout, marble trout, and grayling, which require cold, well-oxygenated, and clean waters more than other species, are experiencing sharp population declines in many of Italy's waterways.

This ecological crisis is also amplified by historical anthropogenic factors such as habitat fragmentation, riverbed construction, poor water resource management, the overuse of chemicals in agriculture, not to mention poaching, which is still endemic in many parts of the country. Italian rivers, especially those in the Alpine foothills and the Apennines, are now showing clear signs of distress. Long stretches once teeming with life have become depleted of fish or even biologically compromised.

In this sadly negative scenario, a curious phenomenon is emerging: interest in fly fishing equipment, and in particular bamboo rods, has been experiencing a true renaissance for many years. This is perhaps because the bamboo rod market is not so much geared towards the mass-produced angler as towards those seeking a more intimate, almost contemplative experience, where catching fish becomes secondary to the technical, aesthetic, and spiritual act of fishing. Growing environmental awareness is leading many enthusiasts toward more sustainable practices: catch and release, the use of barbless hooks, and the establishment of no-kill sections. The bamboo rod thus also becomes a symbol of a different ethic, where contact with the water and the environment is more important than the hunting result. Furthermore, bamboo rods are true objects of fine craftsmanship and transcend their merely technical function.

However, the fundamental question remains: does it make sense to perpetuate a passion for fishing if ecosystems seem to be collapsing? The answer is—I believe—that this very passion becomes a vehicle for environmental awareness and defence. Fly fishermen, especially those who choose gear that embodies a return to origins, slowness, manual skill, and respect for nature, often become the first custodians of rivers, promoters of habitat protection and restoration initiatives, and political pressure for more sustainable water resource management.

In conclusion, the bamboo rod market is not just a niche market of luxury or nostalgia, but represents a form of cultural and ecological resistance. It's a sign that, despite everything, humanity is still trying to re-establish a harmonious relationship with nature, precisely when it seems most fragile.

While I leave you to ponder these considerations, here's a new issue of the Bamboo Journal. What will you find? For starters, lots of news and images from some of the social events IBRA has organized or officially participated in: the annual gathering in May at Belgioioso Castle, the 22nd SIM Fly Festival in Castel di Sangro (report by Saverio Pandolfi), and even a short article on the awarding of the 2025 "IBRA Gabriele Gori" Prize, which took place during the gathering. Remember that nominations for the 2026 award are now open

Peer Doering-Arjes has had the opportunity to personally conduct research in the Smithsonian Institute archives and offers us the first part of the fascinating story of a man whose name is somehow linked to the world of rodmaking, even if not everyone knows him: Floyd Alonzo McClure. He was an American botanist who lived for many years in China, where he became one of the world's leading bamboo experts. Part 2 in the next BJ!

The extensive report on the series of tests IBRA conducted to compare Vietnamese Lo-o bamboo with traditional Tonkin bamboo continues. This second part of the study discusses the laboratory measurements conducted on both samples and rods made from the two materials. I'll share a preview of the third and final part.

And some more technical contributions: Davide Fiorani discusses how to promote resin adhesion, with particular reference to bamboo ferrule tying; Oscar Ferri offers a brief note on a fun "hack" he created using the jig donated to the gathering. In this issue, Giorgio Grondona, in his usual series of reflections, raises the issue of the "Forgotten Element." What is this element? Well, I don't want to spoil the surprise.

Enjoy your reading! Any comments or observations can be sent to editor@rodmakers.it, where they will be forwarded to the authors!

IBRA delegation at the French Gathering in Miramas year2008


Terenzio

IBRA Gathering 2025

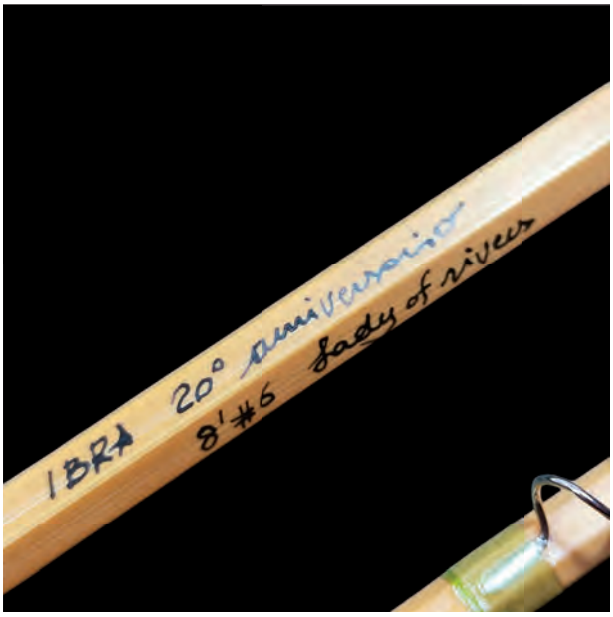
The association's annual gathering took place again this year in the spectacular setting of Belgioioso Castle, on May 17th and 18th.

The sixteenth-century hall in the castle's noble wing hosted both the exhibition of many members' creations and the gathering's scheduled activities. The courtyard's long flowerbeds served as a practice area for the rods. The colonnade hosted midday lunches (thanks to Danilo Marnati and his now well-established team!). The social dinners were held in a nearby venue and were attended by numerous members and supporters. Some numbers:

- 37 registered members
- 53 participants in Saturday's work (including guests)
- 45 participants in Sunday's activities
- Among these, 11 foreigners attended the IBRA gathering (2 from the USA, 2 from France, 2 from Switzerland, and 5 from Denmark)
- Saturday's social dinner was attended by Mayor Fabio Zucca and Councillor Luigi Marozzi, who have supported IBRA for several years now by organizing our gatherings and workshops in Belgioioso.

This year's guest of honour at the gathering was Frank Stetzer, who illustrated the history and development of the HexRod software, which he has been "maintaining" for many years and which—as you know—is available free of charge to rodmakers worldwide. The software and its hosting website are not only useful for modelling and designing bamboo rods, but also integrate a taper database, also available to all rodmakers.

It was in this database that Frank Stetzer found several tapers, stored there by Gabriele Gori, one of which was also used to create the twentieth anniversary rod.



Here's how our guest introduced himself to IBRA:

I'm a 73-year-old amateur rod builder and have lived in Bellingham, Washington, USA, with my wife of 42 years, Rosemary. Bellingham is located in the northwesternmost corner of the Lower 48 states, a temperate rainforest between the Pacific Ocean and the Cascade Mountains.

I have a Master's degree in Applied Statistics and a PhD in Economic Geography. During my working life, I taught geography at two universities and statistics at one, while also working at a university support centre specializing in statistical software. In this job, I learned a little Internet application programming, just enough to be dangerous. I retired in 2010.

I started fly fishing around 1978 and joined a flyfishing club. One of the members built cane rods, completely self-taught from Garrison's book, and gave a presentation at a club meeting. I thought this was something I'd like to do. Then in 1995, Michael Biondo started the Rodmakers listserv, and I signed up on the first day. I picked up Cattanach and Garrison's books and started making rod-building tools. My first rod was completed in 1997, a two-piece, four-nodeless rod on the Sir D taper. I was very proud and showed it to anyone who wanted to see it.

Unfortunately, it broke the first time I fished with it (a nodeless glue that gave way).

Wayne Cattanach's book came with a floppy disk containing the Hexrod program he wrote to calculate Garrison's stress calculations. In 1997, he shared the Hexrod source code with me, and I thought I'd try to create a version that could run on the Internet. It didn't take long to get to the basics. It was easy to add features like graphics, glide shape settings, and calculating a taper from a stress curve online. Many people sent me lots of ideas and Tips along the way. I've continued to use Hexrod as a hobby and, hopefully, as a service to the global rod building community.

I build rods exclusively for myself. I enjoy fishing smaller, more intimate waters. What I enjoy most is discovering a small stream or lake that has more fish, or larger fish, than is commonly known. I know how to keep a secret!

Marzio Giglio was the star of the "Pialla d'Oro (Golden Plane)" award ceremony, the first of the prizes IBRA established last year (you'll find an article entirely dedicated to this year's award in this issue of the BJ).

The Raffle certainly deserves a mention, as it was particularly rich in prizes this year: thanks to everyone who made or donated the numerous items up for grabs, bamboo rods, and much more! We would like to remind you that, as every year, part of the proceeds from ticket sales are donated to charity

RADUNO ITALIANO

17/18 MAGGIO 2025
CASTELLO DI BELGIOIOSO - BELGIOIOSO PAVIA

RIFFA

ELENCO DEI PREMI

	premio	*offerto da*	*biglietto*
1	Gathering Rod 2025	Oscar Ferri, Giorgio Toderini	187
2	Canna del ventennale IBRA - 8'6''#6 in tre pezzi	Poratelli, Borriero, Paccotti, Forlani	195
3	canna da pesca in bamboo 7'3''#4 pentagonale	Mirco Forlani	114
4	canna da pesca in bamboo 7'6''#4 hollow fluted con tubo in legno	Marco Giardina - MOG	207
5	canna da pesca in bamboo 7'#4	Graziano Aceti	4
6	canna da pesca in bamboo quadra 7'3''#3/4 con tubo in legno	Danilo Marnati	159
7	mulinello in radica	Argeo Babbi	134
8	coda in seta di Terenzio DT3F	Mario D'Alessandro	142
9	Tubo portacanna in legno	Roberto Valli	184
10	meccanica portamulinello tipo Garrison	Davide Fiorani	43
11	meccanica portamulinello tipo Garrison	Davide Fiorani	111
12	meccanica portamulinello tipo Garrison	Davide Fiorani	211
13	meccanica portamulinello tipo Garrison	Davide Fiorani	224
14	meccanica portamulinello tipo Garrison	Davide Fiorani	28
15	set di punte da trapano professionali da 1 a 10 mm	Gabriele Ruggeri	166
16	mulinello con coda in seta DT3	IBRA	188
17	confezione mosche	Massimo Clini	77
18	confezione mosche	Massimo Clini	24
19	confezione mosche	Massimo Clini	51
20	mulinello con coda in seta DT4	IBRA	110
21	coda ORVIS DT4	Orvis	50
22	cappellino Loomis	Pesca IN Collegno	136
23	scatola portacomponenti	Pesca IN Collegno	220
24	pinza slamatrice	Pesca IN Collegno	61
25	scatola portacomponenti	Pesca IN Collegno	183
26	Gorgera	Pesca IN Collegno	52
27	confezione mosche	Massimo Clini	69
28	confezione mosche	Massimo Clini	80
29	confezione mosche	Massimo Clini	198
30	filo per finali	Pesca IN Collegno	3
31	scatoletta	Pesca IN Collegno	204
32	coda DT 4 intermedia	Orvis	210
33	tubo portacanna sezione quadra	Danilo Marnati	71
34	confezione mosche	Massimo Clini	53
35	confezione mosche	Massimo Clini	168
36	confezione mosche	Massimo Clini	163
37	porta mosche ottagonale	Pesca IN Collegno	106
38	Borsetto	Pesca IN Collegno	22
39	canna da pesca in bamboo supermarvel	Bernard Rigal	41
40	tronchetti legno di pesco per portamulinello	Danilo Marnati	156
41	mulinello Bretton	Frederic Leroy	189
42	canna da pesca in bamboo di John Calvert	Moreno Borriero	148

As mentioned, this year's prizes included seven bamboo rods (you can find the complete list of prizes and lucky numbers here), including the

"Rod of the Gathering,"

made by Oscar Ferri and Giorgio Toderini, and the

"Rod of the Twentieth Anniversary,"

crafted by Alberto Poratelli, Moreno Borriero, Massimo Paccotti, and Mirco Forlani. The original taper is by Gabriele Gori, and was discovered by Frank Stetzer in the HexRod archives. It's an 8ft 6" rod for size 6 line, in three pieces, and is part of a series called "Lady of River."

Just a few words before we get to the photos, which we're sure everyone will appreciate: for those who were able to be there, they'll be a memento of the occasion, and for those who couldn't, it'll be a little like having been there.

IBRA "GABRIELE GORI" AWARD 2025

by Maurizio Cardamone

The 2025 edition of the prestigious award, the first since its inception, was presented during the association's annual meeting, which took place on May 17th and 18th at Belgioioso Castle.

This first 2025 Golden Plane was awarded to Marzio Giglio, a longtime member and veteran of IBRA, for his recent studies on the modern implementation of the Former Beam method.

Here is the official reason the Award Committee nominated the winner:

With extraordinary technical expertise and pioneering spirit, Marzio Giglio has brought back to light the ancient and nearly forgotten Former Beam method for making tapered strips for bamboo rods. In his own words, "The Former Beam is a technique, suggested by a carpenter, for making triangular bamboo strips. The process, conceptually very simple, consisted of planing the thin strips while they were glued to a groove of variable depth cut along the edge of a wooden bar." His work, however, was not limited to rediscovering this historic technique, but rather improved and perfected it, making it a refined and practical alternative to today's most commonly used methods. Through an in-depth analysis of the original construction principles and meticulous practical experimentation, he refined the method, optimizing the geometry and functionality of the Former Beam to ensure more accurate, efficient, and repeatable workmanship. The improvements achieved, thanks in part to his exploration of aspects of bamboo processing often taken for granted or considered secondary, allow for the creation of tapered strips with extraordinary dimensional quality. His work, characterized by a methodical approach and a tireless pursuit of precision, has enriched the technical heritage of rodmaking, offering new perspectives and practical solutions to an art rooted in tradition. Beyond the purely technical value of his contribution, Marzio has distinguished himself for his generosity in sharing his knowledge, creating opportunities for discussion and inspiration for rodmakers at IBRA and around the world. His work stimulates a renewed curiosity for the techniques of the past, demonstrating how the revival of ancient methodologies can open new horizons to explore.

At the meeting, Marzio presented the latest version of the practical approach for implementing the former, which he achieved after extensive experimentation and having explored a number of related, but decidedly important, topics. I'll mention just one of many: sharpening plane blades. For those interested in learning more about the former beam, here are links to relevant articles Marzio has already published in the Bamboo Journal:

https://www.rodmakers.it/wp-content/uploads/Bamboo_Journal/ITA/BJ13ITA.pdf#page=37

https://www.rodmakers.it/wp-content/uploads/Bamboo_Journal/ITA/BJ15ITA.pdf#page=81

https://www.rodmakers.it/wp-content/uploads/Bamboo_Journal/ITA/BJ27ITA.pdf#page=49

Please note that the Award Committee (CDG) is made up of members designated by the Regulations and elected by the members' assembly. These are: Azzoni, Cardamone (secretary), Giannoni, Poratelli (president), Sanna, Toderini, and Zetti.

The collection of proposals, which began at the May meeting and closed at the end of 2024, resulted in seven nominations being submitted to the CDG (in order of first submission): Marzio Giglio, Philipp Sicher, Simone Menichelli, Bernard Rigal, Frank Stetzer, Enrico Grasselli, and Hoagy Carmichael.

Seven prestigious and worthy nominations, among which, for 2025, Marzio won, to whom IBRA extends its congratulations.

APPLICATIONS FOR THE 2026 EDITION ARE NOW OPEN

Here are some practical guidelines (the complete regulations are available at these links):

https://www.rodmakers.it/wp-content/uploads/Bamboo_Journal/ITA/BJ27ITA.pdf#page=6 (italiano) https://www.rodmakers.it/wp-content/uploads/Bamboo_Journal/ENG/BJ27ENG.pdf#page=6 (English)

The proposal must not refer to the candidate's general merits, but rather must cite a specific element of innovation that can be considered recent (with some flexibility regarding the definition of recent, including its actual dissemination) or refer to a specific event that has significantly contributed to the development of the international rodmaking community, again recent, as described above.

Each nomination, sent to premio@rodmakes.it, must therefore be accompanied by appropriate references, descriptive texts, images, and anything else necessary for the CDP to properly evaluate its merit.

So, everyone, start thinking about who could be a candidate for 2026!

Promoting the adhesion of resins

by Davide Fiorani

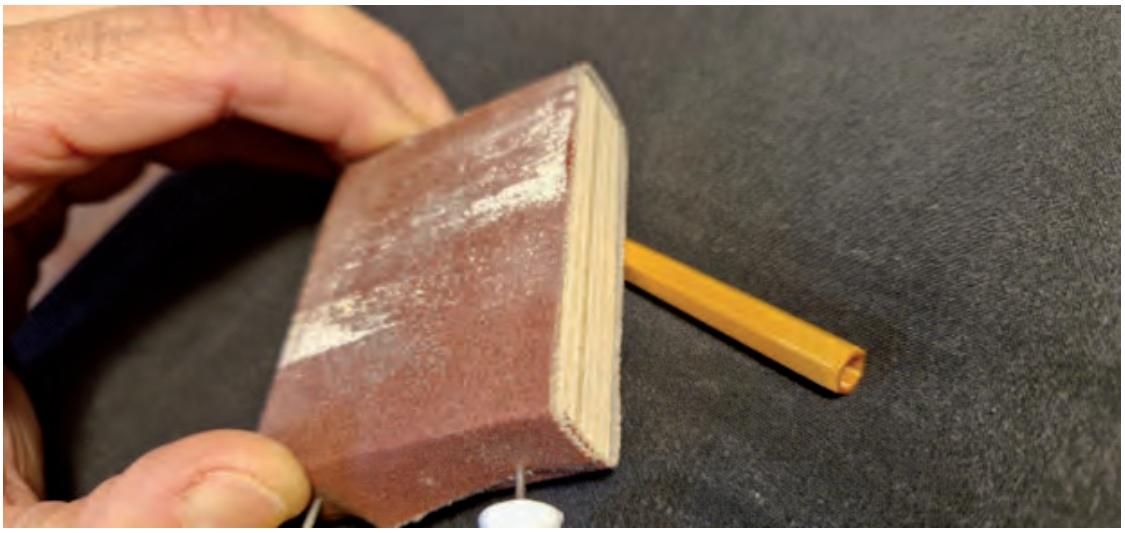
This is a follow-up to my previous article, "Epoxy Resins for Finishing wrapping," published in BJ No. 27, in which I described the preparation and application of these products on ligatures.

I'd like to share a crucial aspect that significantly impacts the success and long-term durability of ligatures and which, in retrospect, might even seem obvious.

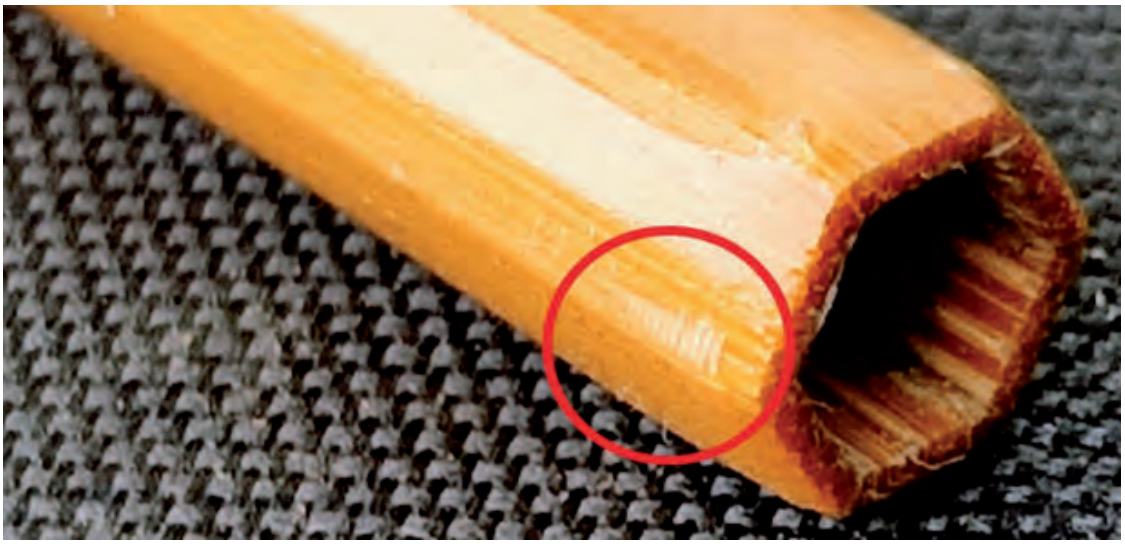
I'm referring specifically to the ligatures used to hold bamboo ferrules, especially those made with silk yarns, which must retain their transparency.

Procedure

As described in that article, it's essential to choose a suitable diameter of silk and ensure that the binding on the edges of the female ferrule is well-impregnated. From direct experience, I've learned that preparing the bamboo surface is a crucial step to ensure a long-lasting, stress-resistant finish. This preparation should be done using medium-grit sandpaper, gently rubbing it over the entire surface of the ferrule that will then be tied, paying particular attention to the edges. It's a good idea to create a slight micro-radius on these edges, thus promoting better resin adhesion.



This step is essential to optimize the resin's adhesion to the bamboo: the ferrule's surface must have a certain roughness, not be as smooth as glass. Furthermore, the edges represent the most critical points of the graft: when subjected to extreme stresses close to breaking, the bond's failure begins precisely there, starting from the lower edge of the ferrule and then progressively propagating upward.



Visually, failure initially manifests itself as a loss of transparency and clouding of the bond, a phenomenon caused by local detachment. To prevent this problem, it is therefore essential to carefully prepare the surface to optimize the resin's adhesion, ensuring a firm anchorage and thus ensuring the bond's stability and durability over time.

Conclusions

If the surface of the blank has already been prepared for painting, resulting in a smooth surface—for example, using a particularly fine 0000 steel wool pad—it is essential to remember to properly work the ferrule binding area, following the instructions provided previously. This step is essential to optimize resin adhesion and minimize the risk of the binding lifting from the blank..


ROD COMPANY

The Bamboo Adventures of Floyd Alonzo McClure in China
Part I

茶杆竹 = Cha Kon Chuk = Tea Stick Bamboo = *Arundinaria amabilis* = *Pseudosasa amabilis* = Tonkin

by Peer Doering-Arjes [1]

Fig. 1 Bamboo painting by Yuan Wu Zhen Mojupu from a book in McClure's collection (1) [2]

"One may live without meat, but lacking bamboo a man is miserable indeed." Floyd Alonzo McClure quoted this sentence of the 'hermit poet' in a lecture 1937 at the Art and Science Club of the Lignan University in Canton [3], where he worked. He continued: "Many of us can sit on the bamboo stool and eat bamboo shoots with bamboo chopsticks and think nothing of it. But who can have his gaze come to rest on a bamboo plant without some stir of feeling. Who among us has not noticed and admired at one time or another, the beauty of bamboo. If there be any such, he must at least have been moved to appreciate its usefulness to which the ingenuity of the Chinese people has brot [4] it in the life of man. And so we all enter together by the door of appreciation, which opens upon the world of truth and beauty. The orderly conquest of observable facts concerning this world is the goal of science, appreciation of its beauty the goal of art. The truth and beauty of the world are inseparable, so art and science complete each other." He later adds: "Imagine the feelings of the man who first discovered that split and glued bamboo would make a better fishing rod than steel." (2)

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1 Correspondence address info@springforelle.de

2 Literature list published in part 2.

3 Today Guangzhou (广州市)

4 The quotations are reproduced in their original form. Spelling and punctuation have not been corrected.

Introduction

Floyd Alonzo McClure was one of the world's leading authorities on the bamboo plant. During his time at Lingnan University, he discovered the provenance of Tonkin, which is still the most used bamboo for rod making today, he classified and named this bamboo species as *Arundinaria amabilis* var. sativa (3, 4). He was born in Shelby County, Ohio, USA on August 14, 1897, of a farm family.

Fig. 2 F. A. McClure, undated (3)

Fig. 3 F. A. McClure as a boy on the farm, Shelby County, Ohio (4)

After completing his undergraduate work at Ohio State University McClure went to China in 1919 as an instructor in horticulture at the Christian College in Canton, which later became the Lingnan University Canton. He continued there as assistant professor, curator of the herbarium, associate professor, and finally as professor of botany and curator of economic botany until 1943.

Simultaneously he worked from 1924 to 1927 as agricultural explorer, 1936 as senior botanist, and from 1944 until 1954 as consultant on bamboo for the US Department of Agriculture. His specialization was the taxonomy of the bamboos (Bambusoideae). He identified 78 new species, more than doubling the known bamboo flora of China. After his years in China, he researched bamboo in South America and in other parts of the world, where it is a native species. In 1943 he was appointed honorary research associate for the National Museum of Natural History of the Smithsonian Institution, a position he held until his death. (5; 6)

On April 15,1970 he passed away in his bamboo garden while removing a plant to give to a young friend. (7, page iii)

In China, he is honoured with a memorial plaque in the Liu De Tang (六德堂) house in Aozai (Fig. 4 and 6), also called "House of the 99 Doors", the location where he first encountered Tonkin. Excerpts of the plaque read: "Bamboo began to enter the international market as early as during the Daoguang period of the Qing Dynasty. … In October 2006, Huaiji County was named "Hometown of Bamboo in China" by the State Forestry Administration." Daoguang reigned from 1820 to 1850. This indicates that the trade in Tonkin had begun long before the Hardy brothers started using it for their rods in 1883 (42) and Demarest began importing it in 1895 (43), at a time when Calcutta cane was still the preferred bamboo species.

Fig. 4 Signpost to the Liu De Tang house Photo P. Doering-Arjes 2015

His estate, personal and scientific correspondence, publications, photographs, Chinese scrolls and books are stored in 26 boxes at the Smithsonian Institution Archives (Fig. 5). (8)

I became aware of this source of information in 2015 whilst researching Tonkin and received the first scans of some interesting correspondence from the McClure archive from the archivist. In 2024 I finally had the opportunity to visit the archives in Washington, D.C. In this publication I have compiled from McClure's work, his travel reports and correspondence what I considered important and interesting in connection with Tonkin, not only regarding rod building, but also to give an insight into the circumstances under which his research took place and what became of his long-term projects.

Fig. 5 Boxes of the Smithsonian Institution Archives, Photo P. Doering-Arjes 2024

McClure in China

In 1923, when he was 26 years old, he wrote to his wife Ruth McClure (Fig. 7) about his desire to make bamboo his life's work: "There is at present no one in the US who is conversant enough with the bamboos – who understands them well enough to be called a real authority. There is a coming demand for Bamboo in this country – not only for fuel, but for food purposes. … There seems to be a great opening now for someone here to step in and make an intensive study of the Bamboos, from the point of view of propagation, shipping living materials, securing and

identifying the most promising economic species and varieties – in short – to become a general expert on Bamboos. … the "problem of the Bamboos" has for some time appealed to me as a life work for one man, and I have been thinking some of settling down to that problem, after I have gotten a little more general experience. … It would be a nice thing, if among other things I could become an authority on Bamboo, wouldn't it." (9)

Fig. 6 Glenn Brackett in front of the memorial plaque for F. A. McClure. Liu De Tang (六德堂), *Aozai. Photo P. Doering-Arjes 2015*

In the final year of his life, he was asked by Fred Gray of Smithsonian Radio: “Could you characterize your life in the field?” McClure replied: “It is very lonely to be the only one concerned about a subject, if no one cares whether any work is done on bamboo." (11)

Fig. 7 Floyd Alonzo McClure and family. Pictured left to right: Sophie Louise McClure (daughter), Ruth (nee Drury) McClure (wife), Floyd Alonzo McClure, and Janet ("Bunny") McClure (daughter). July 1937, Kikungshen, China. (10)

At the Canton Christian College, respectively the Lingnan University he taught botany, helped build up an herbarium, and promoted the exchange of plants between China and the West (Fig. 8 and 10). He described his occupation as follows: “In the teaching work my purpose has been to lead students to appreciate the universal dependence of mankind upon plants, and the part which they therefore play in international relations and to develop in my students [Fig. 9] the scientific attitude and the habitual use of the scientific method which is one of the most valuable gifts which the West has to offer China. … Many of the varieties secured for Chinese

farmers were originally from China and had been improved by means of western scientific breeding and selection. … The farmers are continually expressing in various ways, their appreciation of the benefits they have arrived by this contact with the West come on through Lingnan. … We have a bamboo garden in which more than 60 kinds of Chinese bamboos may be studied and compared, one of the finest collections of Chinese bamboos to be found anywhere." (12)

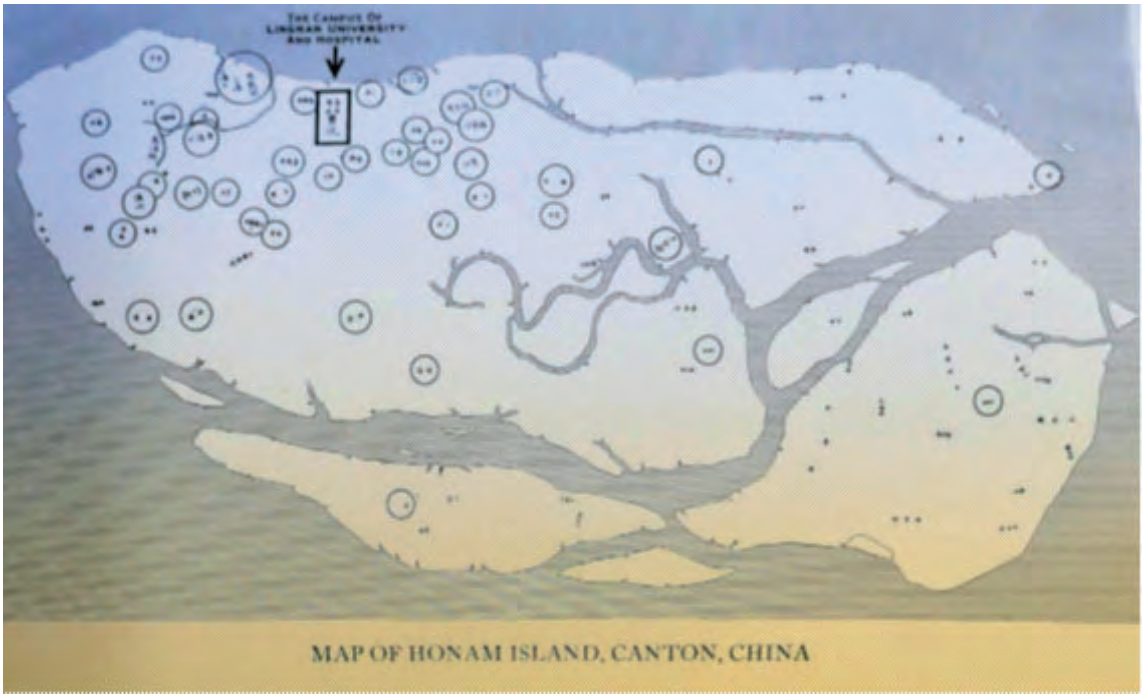

Fig. 8 Location of Lingnan University in Canton 1929 (today Guangzhou, 广州市) (12)

He went on his first field trip for the Canton Christian College Herbarium in 1921. "Experience soon made it clear, however, that's the usual measure of collecting bamboos, and as they are encountered in the field, could never result in a satisfactory and representative collection. … a bamboo usually does not produce flowers when it is in the height of its vegetative growth, and when it is in flowering condition the vegetative growth is more or less suppressed." Therefore, he initiated a bamboo garden in 1925 to visit throughout at least one annual growth cycle.
Over the years he conducted 45 field trips to 7 provinces in China, making 1500 sheets of mounted specimens of herbarium material (Fig. 11) plus 3000 duplicates for exchange and collected over 100 tools used for making bamboo articles and 150 numbers of articles made of bamboo. (13)
The office of Foreign Seed and Plant Introduction of the US Department of Agriculture financed McClure's field trips from 1925 to 1927 as Agricultural Explorer in China. The plant pathologist B. T. Galloway from that office wrote 1925: "We are putting a lot of faith in this effort of yours to get edible bamboos, and most sincerely trust that your effort will be successful. … I note that you have been in one of the famous fruit regions, and to trust that you were able to locate some things which later may come to us in the form of bud, wood or seeds. Persimmons, chestnuts, and pears are some of the things we are particularly interested in." (15)

McClure supplied live samples of bamboo (Fig. 12) to several experimental stations in South America and the USA, including Mayagüez, Puerto Rico (Fig. 22) and Savannah, Georgia.

Fig. 9 "My Class in General Botany at Lingnan University, 1927" (12)

A letter from 1925 shows how careful he was with his budget: "I have in every instance secured the most inexpensive accommodations in travelling regardless of personal discomfort." It also becomes clear what his mission was, and the associated problems: "I am still very eager to place in our files good photographs of as many promising varieties of Chinese economic plants as possible. … I spared no time or pains to secure in adequate quantities, rhizomes of the many splendid kinds of edible bamboos which I found. This is a very delicate point. Those who are in any way antagonistic to my taking material from their garden often flatly refuse permission. Others give permission only on terms of exorbitant prices." (16)

Details of his travel experiences can be found in his diaries, for example from a boat trip in 1924: "It is an interesting experience to sit by the hour in the closest possible contact with freight and the commonest sort of folk. I feel quite at home. Everyone seems to be sociable and approachable. The air is full of chatter. Men and women are mixed about indiscriminately. The passengers adjust themselves with better grace than that which I have often seen exhibited by American folk and first class accommodations. A young woman sits perched on a tall box over there, with her shoes off, and her baggage beside her casually smoking a cigarette, and thus adding fragrance to the already overcharged air. Presently the potent fumes of opium call to my attention the emaciated form of a billager [5] reclining in an unbelievably small space, warming the

5 Probably a typo: villager

bowl of his opium pipe over a tiny lamp – and inhaling fumes, which to his are exhilarating but to an uninitialed person are almost nauseating." (17)

Fig. 10 Translation of the caption: "Lingnan University, Biological Society, group photo of all 27 members on 6 May." Floyd A. McClure left rear, 1938. (14)

Fig. 11 Tonkin specimen collected and identified by McClure in 1925 (NMNH 6 -00131598-000001)

6 NMNH: National Museum of Natural History – Botany Department, Washington DC.

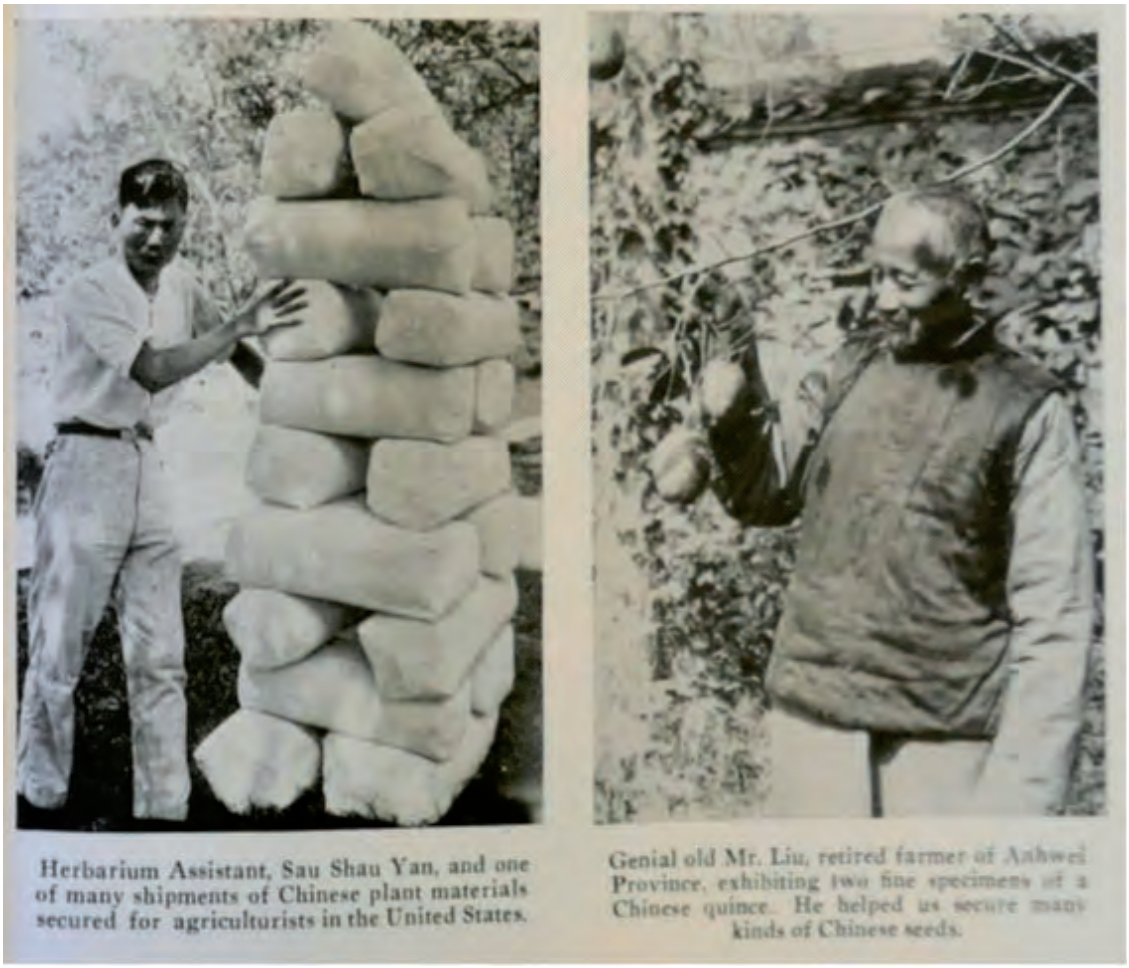

Fig 12 Shipment of plants and seeds (12)

On his trip to Kwong Ning and Wai Tsaap 1925 he notes: “One bad gang is still extant and many of the natives are afraid to cross to the opposite side of the river. I noticed 2 armed men looking at me rather sasserly as we passed. Mr. Chan told me later that they were formerly of this gang of robbers. Mr. Chan said that 1 1/2 months ago it would have been impossible for me to have gone to Koon T’aa Haang after this bamboo.” (18)

It seems that he came across the origin of Tonkin by chance. His task was generally to search for fruits and plants of commercial interest on behalf of the US Department of Agriculture. There is no evidence in his correspondence that he was asked especially to find out where the material for making bamboo rods came from. On the contrary, in a letter he wrote after returning to Canton from his trip to Kwang-tung Province in 1925: “I am convinced that the only way we'll ever know what this old province holds for us is just to systematically cover the ground, following clues as one goes. I find that it is impossible to get full or reliable information here. When one inquires of such someone who ought to know, for instance, a dealer or a person of education and travel with regard to the source of common products as bamboo sprouts, bamboo canes, paper, tea, fruits, etc., the reply one gets is likely to be unintentionally misleading, an intermediate point of shipment nearly always being given as the source.” (16)

He left the Canton Christian College with To Kang Peng (Fig. 13), his chief plant collector, whom he regularly took along as his assistant on these trips, Thursday afternoon April 16, 1925, for his

trip to the Sui River (Fig. 15 and 16). This river was described and called 'The Bamboo River' by Benjamin Couch Henry, an American missionary, explorer and one of the founders of Lingnan University, who travelled through southern China before McClure in the late 19th century (19): "... continuous bamboo groves that line its banks along nearly its whole course. … Above Sz-ui the hills approach the river, and the long fringe of bamboo begins to appear as we enter the Kwong-ning district. This is the great bamboo-producing district in the province. For nearly one hundred miles the groves extend without a break, not only covering the low lands along the river, but extending up the sides of steep and rocky hills." Henry also passes the town of Aozai, which McClure visited in 1925: "… the river winds through thick groves, and on one of its many bends is found the little market town of Ow-tsai, the first we reach in Kwong-si province. Perched on the high bank at the mouth of a small ravine, it is the dirtiest little place along the whole river."

Fig. 13 M84 - To Kang Peng, chief plant collector and family 1920, Canton

In addition to his finds, McClure also describes the country and people on his journey in a letter to Wilson Popenoe from the Office of Foreign Seed and Plant Introduction: "When we had walked two miles, thanks to the kindness of a villager who knew personally of the work of the Canton Christian College, we were invited to stop for the night. Rice, a bowl of greasy water, called soup, in which the one fresh vegetable was boiled, a dish of dark green leaves rendered flaccid but not changed in flavor by their brief stay in the pot, a few hunks of dried fat pork, long since rancid, and retaining still the skin and half the hair possibly as a guarantee of its genuineness. … Right in this connection I might say that with the penetration of Russian

Bolshevik propaganda to these country villages, the time may come when this work of ours, which is so readily interpreted as exploitation, will be quite impossible of accomplishment here. … Canton is a hotbed of Russian propaganda. … The simple uneducated people are being stirred with shouts that citizens of capitalistic nations are here only to exploit China's resources and interfere with her internal affairs, and that China must be allowed to work out her own problems in her own way." (16)

On April 17 he gets the first information about Tonkin: "Extensive areas of bamboos, presumably Chang Ko Chuk (7), begin to occur shortly above Taai T'ong on the east side of the river. … A man tells me that Cha Kon Chuk is grown at Kwang Ning .(8)" (18) (Fig. 14)

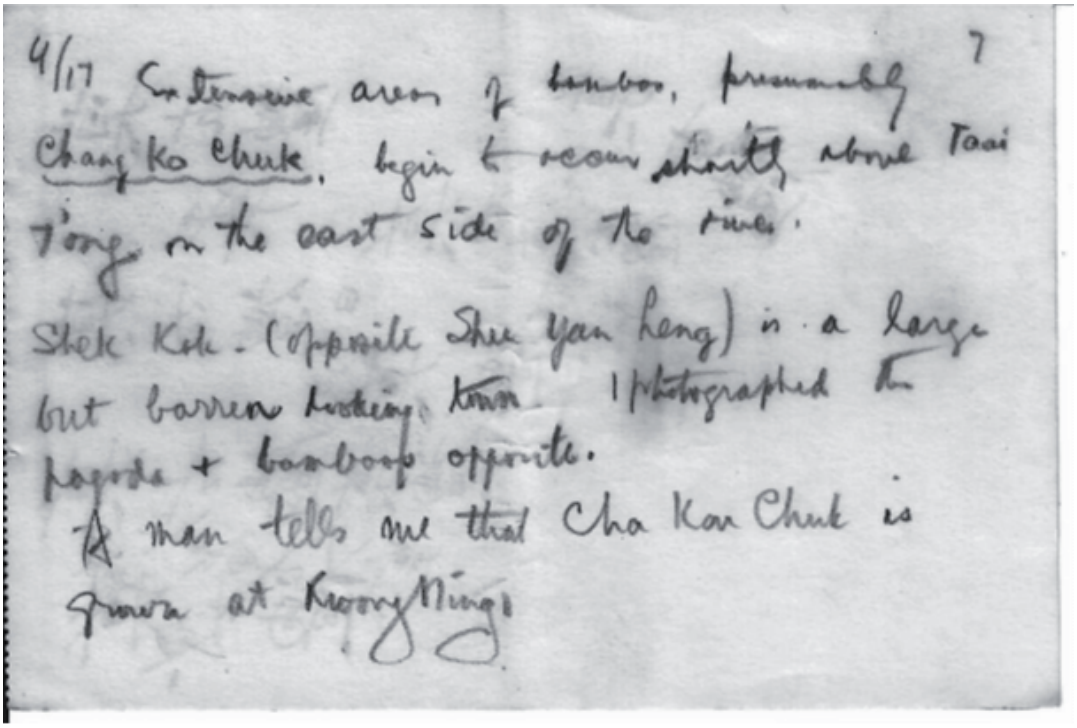

Fig. 14 McClure's diary record from his Trip to Kwong Ning and Wai Tsaap, 17th April 1925 (18)

In Kwong Ning they found the hospitable door of a Christian chapel. The pastor had many friends along the Sui River: "… wherever I went his name was the password that gave me magic introduction. Even the robbers know him. From this point onward my work was greatly facilitated by the friends of this man, …, and although the region which I subsequently visited is the most notoriously robber-ridded of any I have yet touched. … Our boat was boarded no less than five times by special guards of 20 heavily armed soldiers, to escort us past dangerous places. Their manner of coming abrupt in one place afforded a thrilling example of the ease with which a small group of robbers could hold up a boat. Having boarded a rowboat they had the boatman to place his boat at right angles to our course and the only channel deep enough for our boat to pass and then kneeling on one knee and training their guns to us they called to us to stop when

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(7) The romanization varies: Chank Ko Chuk or Ah Kon Chuk or Cha Kon Chuk.

(8) It is a District northwest of Canton, see fig. 17. The romanization varies: Kwang Ning or Kwong Ning

we had come within about 100 yards of them. To the uninitiated this was a little thrilling, to say the least."

On April 27, 1925, he arrived in Au Tsai (9) at 9 o'clock: "My reason for pushing on to this place was the very interesting fact that it is the center of the region which furnishes the bamboo which is exported to many countries for fishing poles and other purposes. This bamboo is known locally as Ah Kon Chuk and Sha Paak Chuk (Fig. 11), the latter name from the fact that it is scoured with sand and bleached white in the sun (Fig. 19). From the point of view of the commercial value of its canes it is the most important bamboo produced in southern China, I believe, so far as I know it is the only bamboo exported to foreign countries. The sprouts are said to be edible also, but they are rarely eaten on account of the great value of the mature canes." (16)

At Oo Shek Tsuen (about 4 miles north of Au Tsai), where they are the first foreigners ever to come to this village, he notes: "… Cha Kan Chuk is in predominance here." (18)

"On the following day we went, in spite of the rain to Loh Fung village to call upon our host of the night before who reputed to have the best Ah Kon bamboo that is produced anywhere, excelling in smoothness of joint, toughness and uniformity in size (lack of taper). Certainly this bamboo reaches a greater size there than any I saw elsewhere. I measured one cane which was 19 cm [7.5 in] in circumference four feet above the ground. Canes of this large size bring thirty cents each delivered at the river. Again we were treated to lunch and again secured a quantity of rhizomes of Ah Kon Chuk and also of Fu Chuk, an edible bamboo which is half cultivated here. … so we did not reach Canton until nearly noon the next day, Friday, May 1, having been away from the college just 15 days. It was the best trip I have had yet. I went farther and unearthed more than I could possibly have foretold hold from the meager information available at Canton. … They [the bamboos] are very interesting, particular the Ah Kon Chuk, which is said by the local people to have begun in the last five years to flower for the first time in nearly a hundred years. It is cultivated in a very limited area, and may not be known to science." (16)

In the same year he published his findings about Tonkin (20). He only used its local name Cha Kon Chuk (茶杆竹). He did not yet use the term Tonkin, which had already appeared in 1902 to describe this bamboo species (21), and was later adopted by the Montague City Rod Company (22, p. 14). By unknown routes Tonkin made its way out of China decades before. McClure wrote "… a large part of the annual crop of this bamboo finds its way into the export trade and is sent to America, England, and Europe for the manufacturing of fishing rods, etc. … Cha Kon Chuk is put through a special process in its preparation for the market. The culms are taken to a point on the stream where a supply of clean, fine sand is available. Here the canes are all thoroughly scoured and washed to make them clean and smooth (10). Then they are then dried and cured in the sun, usually about a week in good weather. They are then sorted, cut into the desired lengths, bound into bundles of standard size and stowed into large native freight boats for shipment to Canton or Fat Shan. This bamboo is never floated to market because the water would stain it and thereby decrease its market value. Most of the crop of this bamboo, is, so far as I know, grown only in a limited area near the boundary between Kwangtung and Kwangsai provinces in the two districts of Kwong Ning and Wai Tsaap .(11)" (20)

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(9) *Today: Aozai*

(10) *Nowadays, the culms are scoured mechanically*

(11) Wai Tsaap District is today Huaiji County, 1952 transferred from Guangxi Province to Guangdong Province

"... I think it is one of the most important commercial bamboos this province has to offer. ... I think I should make another trip this year to the region where it is found for the purpose of getting more propagating material and information concerning it. It is the one which is exported in the largest quantities to France, Germany, England and the States I understand." (23)

He was back in November 1928. He finds Tsaang Ko and Tsing P'ei in flower but not Ah Kon [Chuk]. He notes in his diary: "Out after flowers and large specimen of Cha Kon Chuk. All flowers passee – [Flowers] open April – some each year." (24)

Fig. 15 South China on a map from 1922 (25). The blue rectangle marks the area of Kwangtung Province shown in McClure's sketch from 1925 (Fig. 16) (12).

(12) *Published in part 2.*

The **gimmick** of *the day*...

by Oscar Ferri

I was there fiddling with the 60-degree angle measuring device—the gadget donated by IBRA at this year's annual meeting in Belgioioso—when a crazy idea struck me:

"I want to mount it on the calliper."

I looked around and grabbed the four things I imagine everyone has at home:

- Attack glue,
- baking soda,
- magnet,
- calliper
- the gadget, of course!

I attach two thin magnets to the back of the calliper to centre the gauge on the blade, toward the front of the calliper

At this point I place the gadget which remains in position held by the magnets.

Superglue and baking soda to strengthen the bond, both front and back...

So off with the magnets, a swipe of black marker on the bicarbonate showing.

and the contraption is done!!!

LO-O (BAMBUSA PROCERA) AN ALTERNATIVE BAMBOO FOR RODMAKING

Part 2

Measurements on material samples and dynamic tests on the rods

by Maurizio Cardamone, Massimo Paccotti, Alberto Poratelli

Introduction to the project

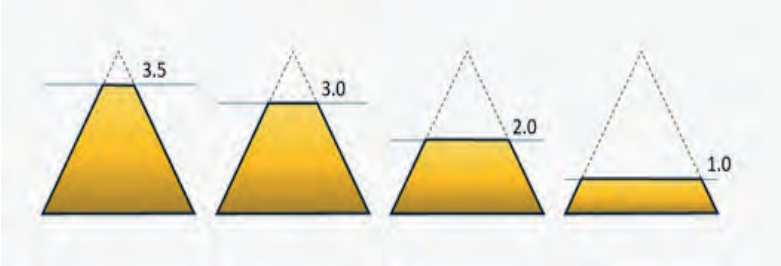
In the second half of 2024, IBRA decided to launch a structured project, assembling various tests on a new species of bamboo that has been available for rodmaking for some time. The material currently on the market has some unique characteristics, and the project's goal is to offer all Bamboo Journal readers a comprehensive and well-documented analysis from which they can build their own personal experience, if desired.

In the last issue of Bamboo Journal, #28, the first part of the report was published, detailing an initial series of measurements and tests conducted on the new material and traditional Tonkin. Here's the link to the article: https://www.rodmakers.it/wp-content/uploads/Bamboo_Journal/ITA/BJ28ITA.pdf#page=21

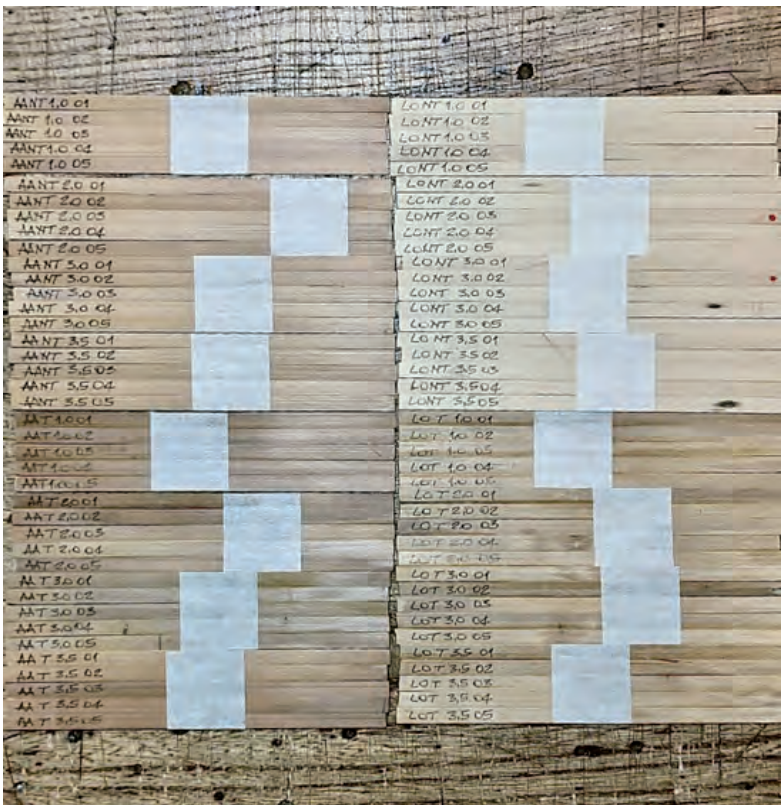
The first part primarily illustrated and discussed the design of a rod made from Vietnamese Lo-o bamboo that would have the same "nominal" casting power as the one made from Tonkin bamboo and chosen for the comparative casting tests: Alberto Poratelli's "The Brook." It is a 7'6" rod for a #4 weight line, three-piece construction, and bamboo ferrules. The taper of the Lo-o version was then recalculated to compensate for the average MOE and density values, which are significantly different for the two bamboo species, so that the two rods would produce approximately identical deflection for different static load values. This was the criterion adopted to define the equipotency of the two rods, so that they could be tested, at least initially, with the same fly line

Sample preparation

Level strips were obtained from the available Lo-o bamboo (Bambusa procera) segment, just under a meter long, and strips of a similar length were obtained from a Tonkin (Arundinaria amabilis) culm from the IBRA warehouse.
Half of the strips of both bamboo species were tempered using a standard, identical process for both materials (45 minutes at a temperature between 100 and 120 degrees Celsius to eliminate moisture). The strips were then removed from the oven, which was heated to 180 degrees Celsius. The strips were reinserted for 4 + 4 minutes at a constant temperature, turning them over halfway through the treatment to compensate for possible temperature inhomogeneities within the oven.
For each of the two species, with and without heat treatment, triangular strips 5 mm wide (4.33 mm high) were then obtained. The samples for the dynamometer tests were obtained by milling the internal vertex and reducing them to four predefined thicknesses of 3.5 mm, 3.0 mm, 2 mm, and 1 mm, from which 120 mm long segments were cut. No nodes were found in the Lo-o segment, while the nodes were discarded when cutting the Tonkin.
The final samples therefore have a trapezoidal cross-section with a cross-sectional area decreasing with thickness: 10.4, 9.8, 7.7, and 4.4 mm2, respectively. It is obviously conceivable that the 1.0 mm thick strips are composed almost entirely of PF, and that the percentage of PF in the cross-section decreases nonlinearly as the height of the strips increases.



The versions produced were therefore: the two bamboo species, each evaluated with and without heat treatment, and for each of these, five identical samples at four different heights. In total, dynamometer measurements were taken on 80 samples.
The image shows the Tonkin samples on the left and the Lo-o samples on the right; the untreated samples are at the top, and the samples subjected to the heat treatment described above are at the bottom. This darkened all the samples, with a more noticeable effect on the Lo-o.



Dynamometer measurements

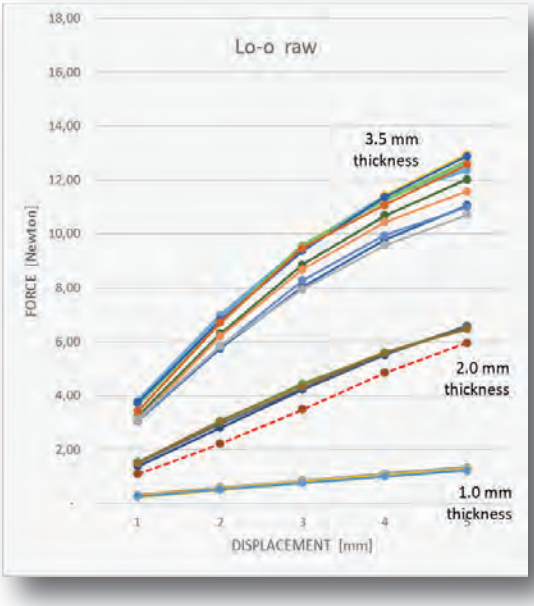
The measurements on the samples were carried out with a SAUTER digital dynamometer model FH50, with a maximum capacity of 50 N, and an accuracy of 0.01 N.

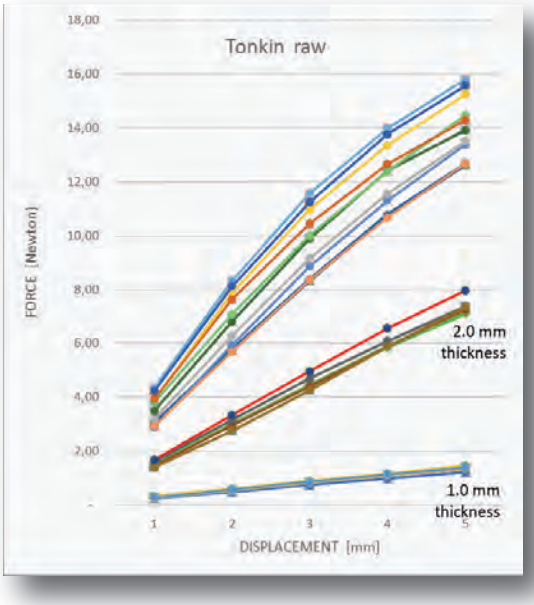
Each sample was clamped at one end, in a horizontal position, with the enamel facing upward.

The dynamometer applied an increasing force in the vertical direction 50 mm from the clamped end, using a conical tip that was free to slide on the sample. The force applied was recorded in Newtons when the deflection reached predetermined values of 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 mm.

The 400 measurements (80 samples x 5 deflection values) were taken over two days under nearly constant ambient temperature and humidity conditions (21°C and 70%). The groups of 5 identical samples for each of the configurations being evaluated allow for statistical control over the stability of the observed parameters, as well as the accuracy of the measurements.

For example, the two graphs below show the entire set of measurements for the Lo-o and Tonkin bamboo samples, in this case without heat treatment. All 5 samples for each of the 4 thicknesses are displayed in the graphs. The horizontal axis indicates the progressively increasing deflection in mm, while the vertical axis represents the corresponding force in Newtons. For the same deflection, the force is always greater for Tonkin, obviously confirming that the Elastic Modulus (EMO) of this species is, as we already knew, significantly higher. There is also an "anomalous" sample highlighted by the dashed curve in the "Lo-o raw" graph, but in general the trends of the curves show a certain consistency between homologous samples of both materials.



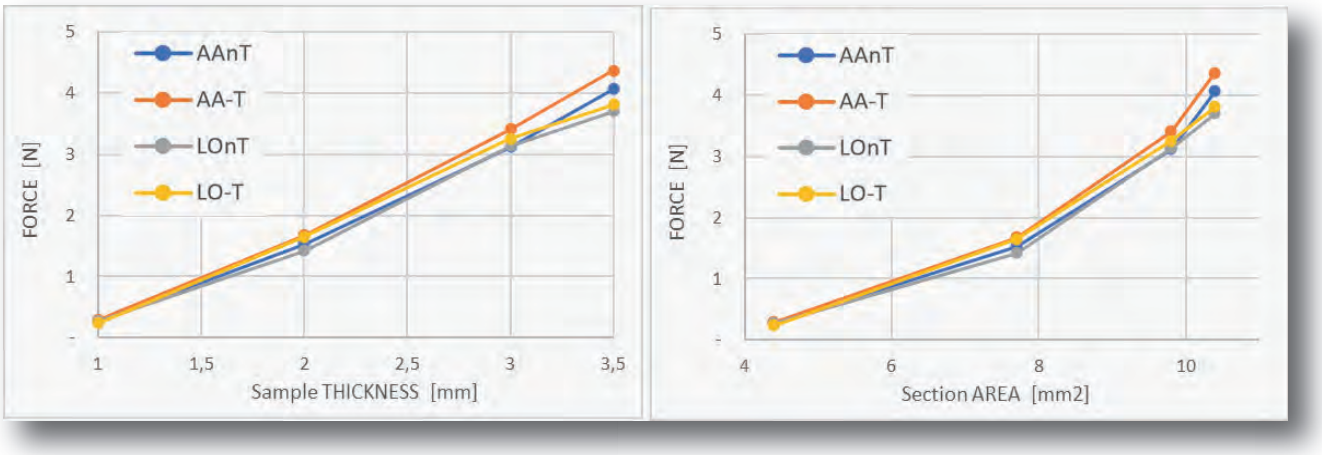


The measurements performed on the equivalent samples were then averaged, after discarding the very few measurements that deviated from the trend, and the comparisons were continued with these average values.

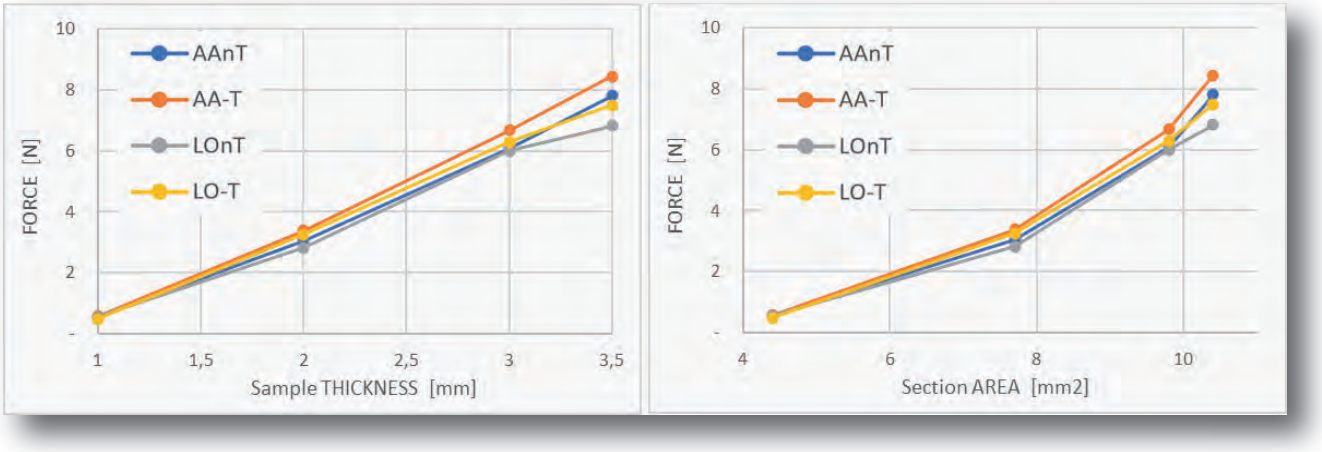
The following series of graphs directly compares the behaviour of untreated Tonkin (AAnT), heat-treated Tonkin (AA-T), untreated Lo-o (LOnT), and finally heat-treated Lo-o (LO-T).

Each panel refers to one of the five deflection values at which the dynamometer measurements were taken. In the left graph of each panel, the horizontal scale represents the thickness of the strip. In the right graph, the horizontal scale represents the cross-sectional area of the strip. This second representation highlights that the cross-sectional areas (which are isosceles trapeziums) are not linearly proportional to the thicknesses. It should also be noted that the vertical force scale has been adapted on a case-by-case basis to better represent the data.

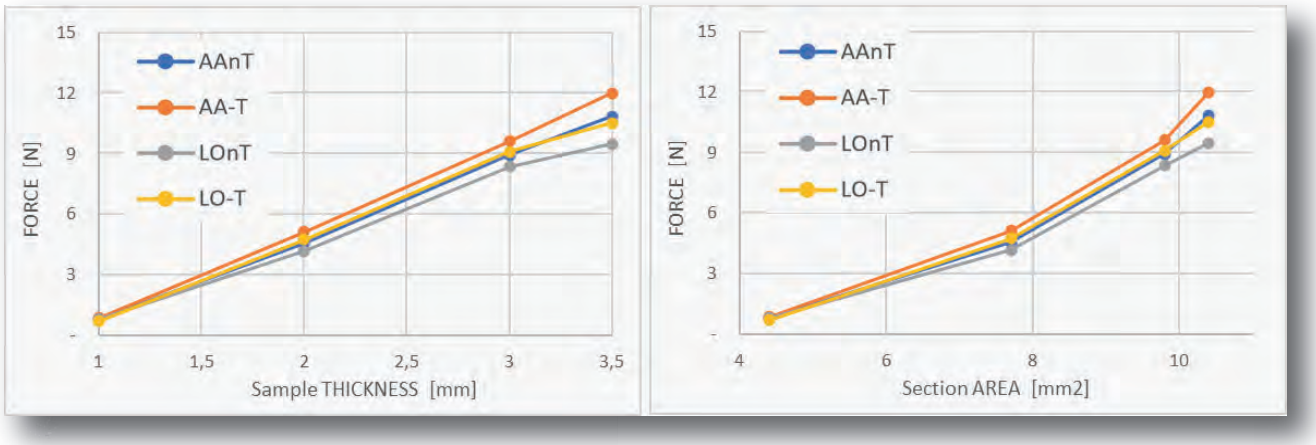
1 mm displacement



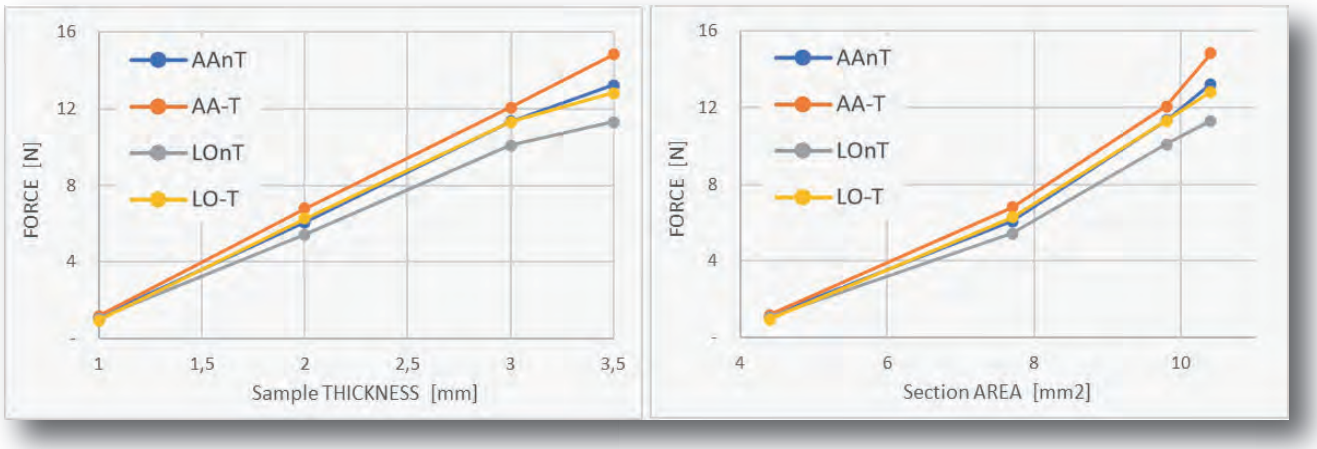
2 mm. displacement



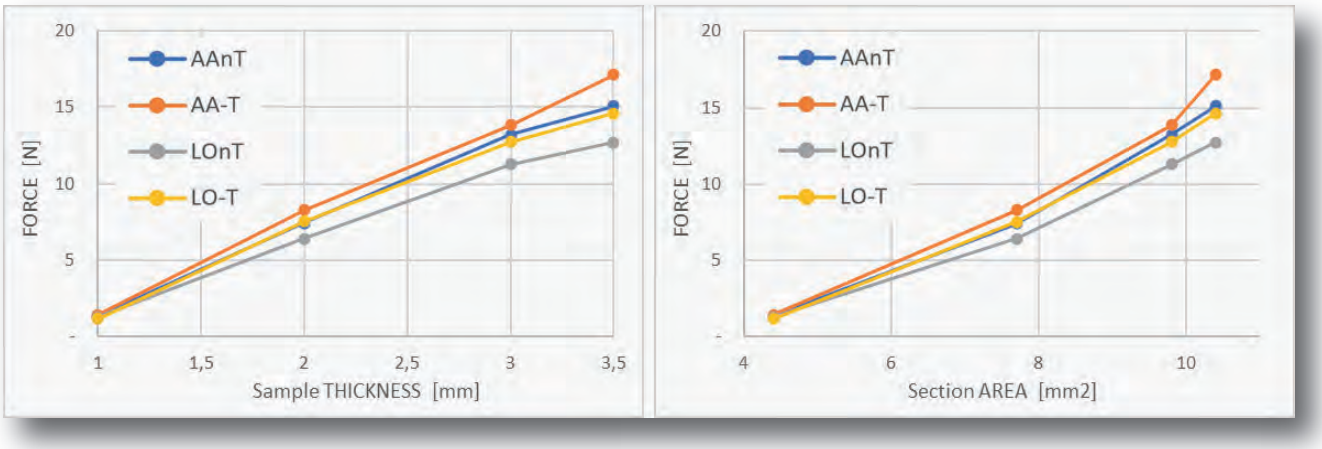
3 mm. displacement



4 mm. displacement



5 mm. displacement



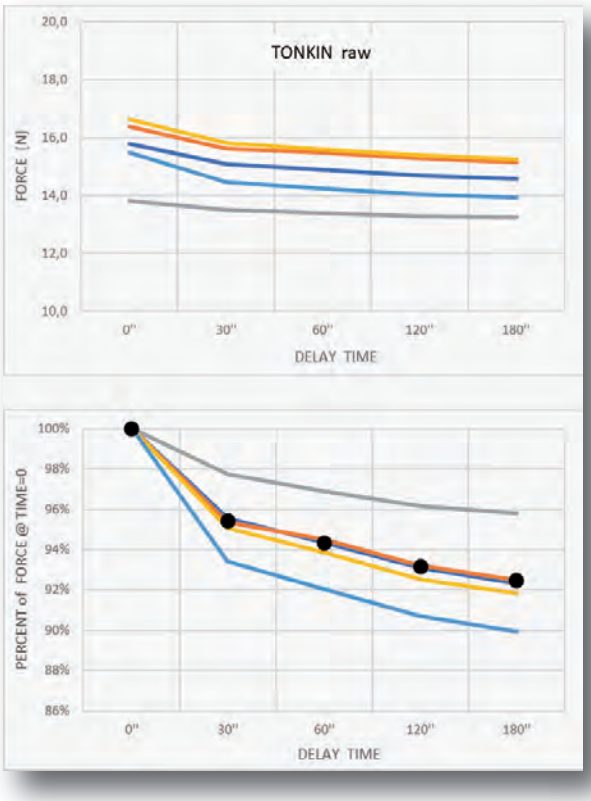
Everyone can make their own assessments of the collected data, which, we remind you, are not intended to estimate the elastic parameters of the materials, but only to make an objective comparison under identical conditions. We can certainly note that the data confirm the expectation of lower stiffness for Lo-o bamboo, which laboratory measurements already available in the literature attribute a 17% lower MOE value (see Part 1 in BJ28).

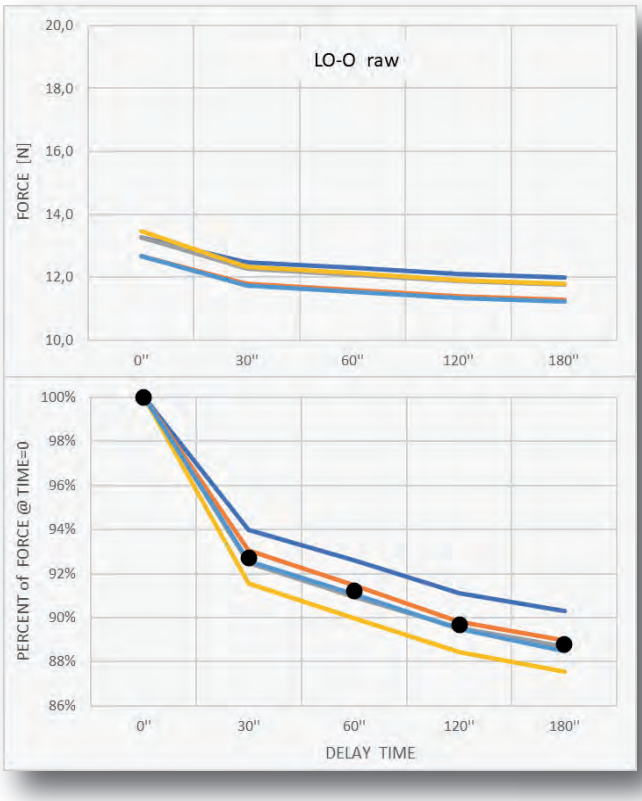
In all graphs, an anomaly in the curves is visible, possibly to varying degrees, as the thickness goes from 3.0 to 3.5 mm: this could be explained by the thinning of the PF toward the inner part of the culm wall.

Hysteresis test

Data was also collected to verify the existence of a possible "hysteresis" in the material. The test was limited to 3 mm thick samples (5 identical samples, 2 bamboo species, with/without heat treatment = 20 samples), for which the force required to maintain a constant 5 mm deflection was recorded after 30", 60", 120", and 180".

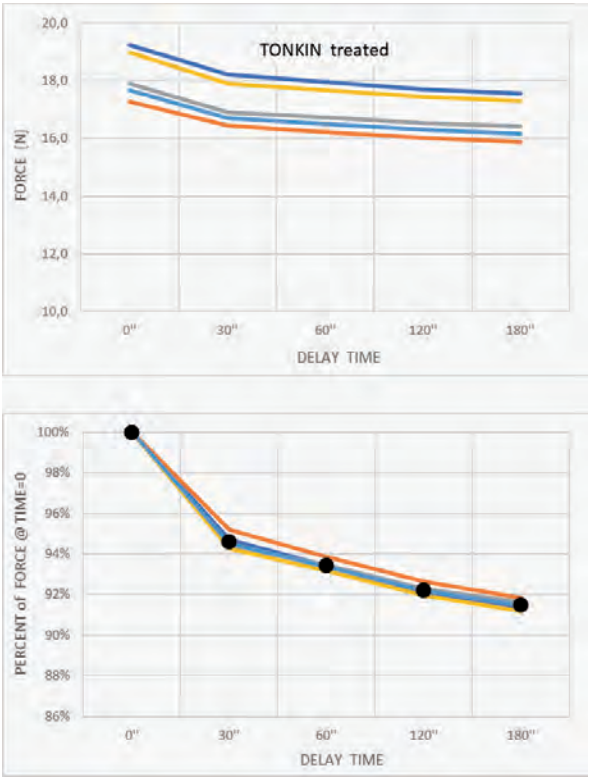
The final measurement consisted of recording the residual deflection of each sample at the moment the applied force was zeroed. Once again, the aim was to compare the two bamboos based on objective data measured under identical conditions. All measurements for this test were performed under fairly constant laboratory temperature and relative humidity (23°C, 64-67%).

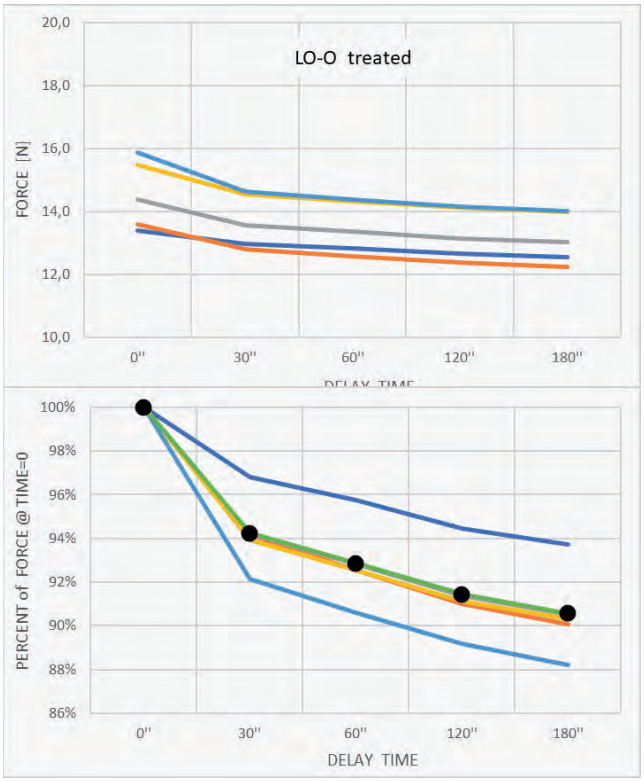




The first two pairs of graphs compare Tonkin and Lo-o without heat treatment. The horizontal scale shows the time after the target deflection (5 mm in this case) was reached. The vertical axis in the first graph (top) indicates the force required to maintain the same deflection. In the graph below, the force is shown as a percentage of the initially applied force. The coloured curves relate to the five samples, while the black dots indicate the calculated average values.

In the second set of graphs, we compare Tonkin and Lo-o after heat treatment.





All this data indicates that, for both materials, although to a slightly different extent, there is an "adaptation" to deformation, which appears not yet stabilized after the 180" of the last measurements.

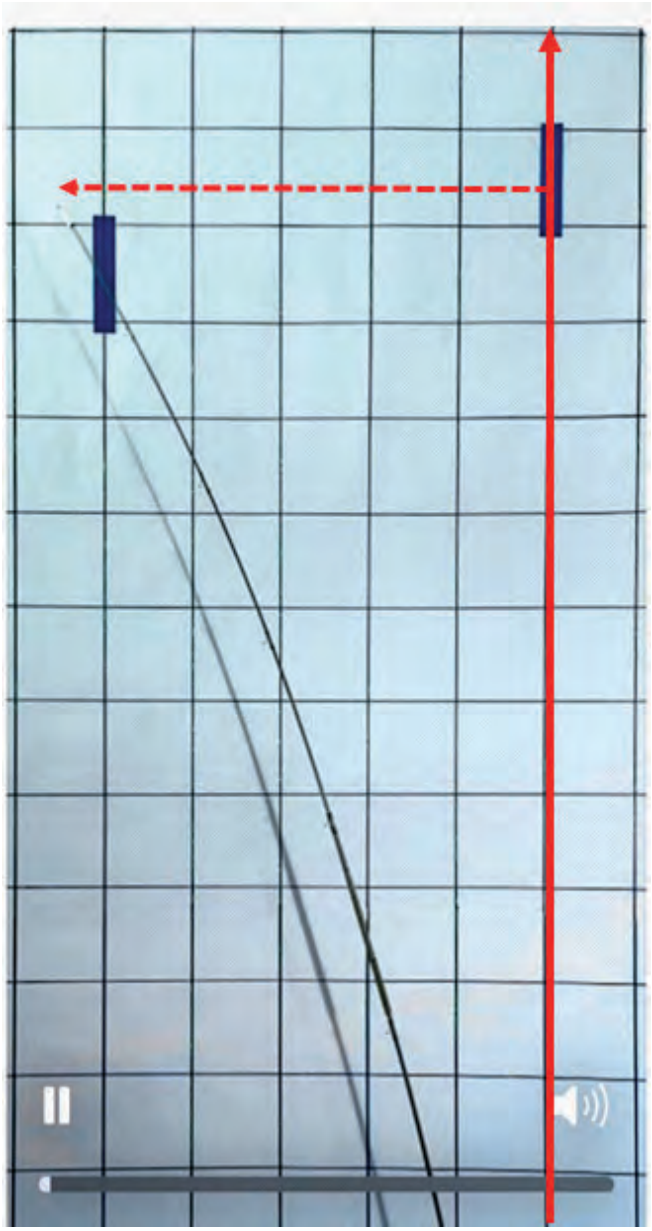
It is interesting to note that after removing the applied force, the samples maintain a residual deflection ranging from 10% to 18%, reported in the table in mm (recall that these values are measured at a distance of 50 mm from the sample constraint and refer to an initial deflection of 5 mm). We also note that both species reduce the residual deflection as a result of heat treatment, and that Lo-o exhibits a consistently greater residual deflection than Tonkin.

	Min	Max	Mean
TONKIN raw	0,58	0,69	0,64
LO-O raw	0,73	1,08	0,89
TONKIN treated	0,47	0,52	0,49
LO-O treated	0,60	0,82	0,70

Dynamic tests on rods: oscillation period and damping

Having completed the sample measurements, we return to the two test rods, the original "The Brook" in Tonkin and its equivalent in Lo-o (for an illustration of the criteria used to implement the concept of equivalence, see Part 1). Here, we will compare the experimental results of some simple dynamic measurements to which the two rods were subjected. These consisted of evaluating the natural frequency of free oscillation of the rod and determining the damping factor of these oscillations.

IBRA does not (yet) have a professional-level scientific laboratory, nor was the purpose of the test to perform absolute measurements of elastic moduli or anything else, but simply to compare the two rods based on numbers. Although affected by some measurement inaccuracies, these are likely more representative of subjective impressions reported by different people. The setup for these tests is very simple and consisted of rigidly fixing the rod to the ground, in a vertical position, against the background of a panel featuring a 10x10 cm square grid.



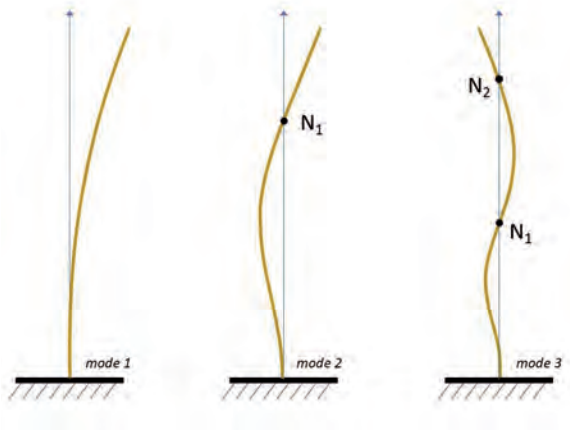
The rod was flexed and secured with a constraint at the tip, which was then suddenly released, allowing it to oscillate freely. The experiment was filmed from a distance sufficient to minimize parallax error.

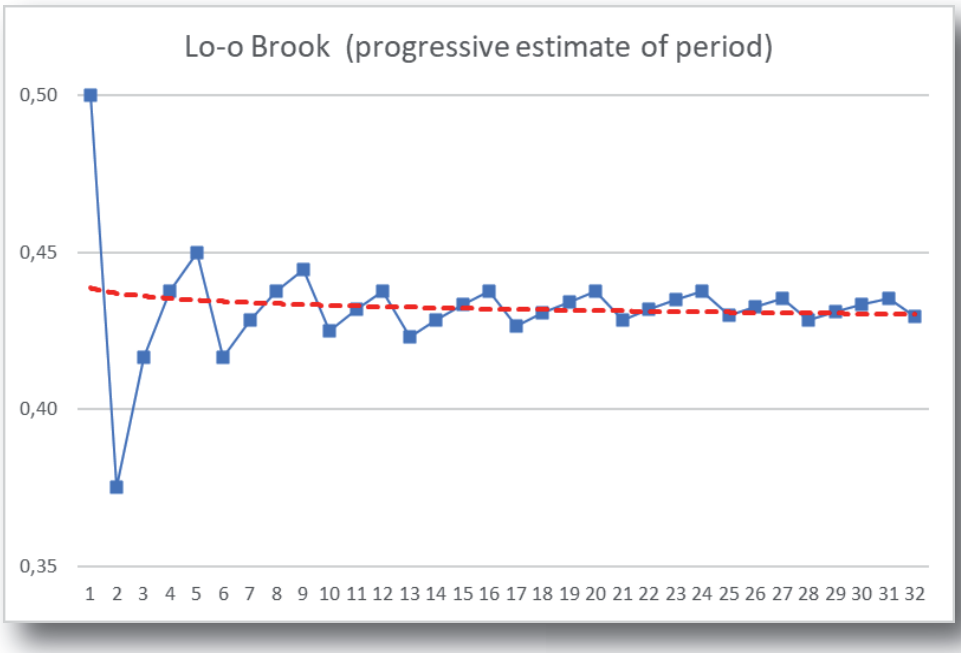
From the video, slowed down by a factor of 6X, the total times of each of the first 32 consecutive oscillations were read, as well as the corresponding deflection of the tip from its vertical rest position. The oscillation period attributed to the rod—obviously assumed to be constant—was then obtained by mathematically extrapolating the measurements of the 32 consecutive oscillations.

This minimized the period estimation errors resulting from the frame rate intervals of the video recording, as well as the measurement error due to the coexistence of different oscillation modes. The interference of different oscillation modes was clearly visible in all recorded videos, and it can be expected that this would introduce an error in both the reading of the oscillation times and their amplitudes.

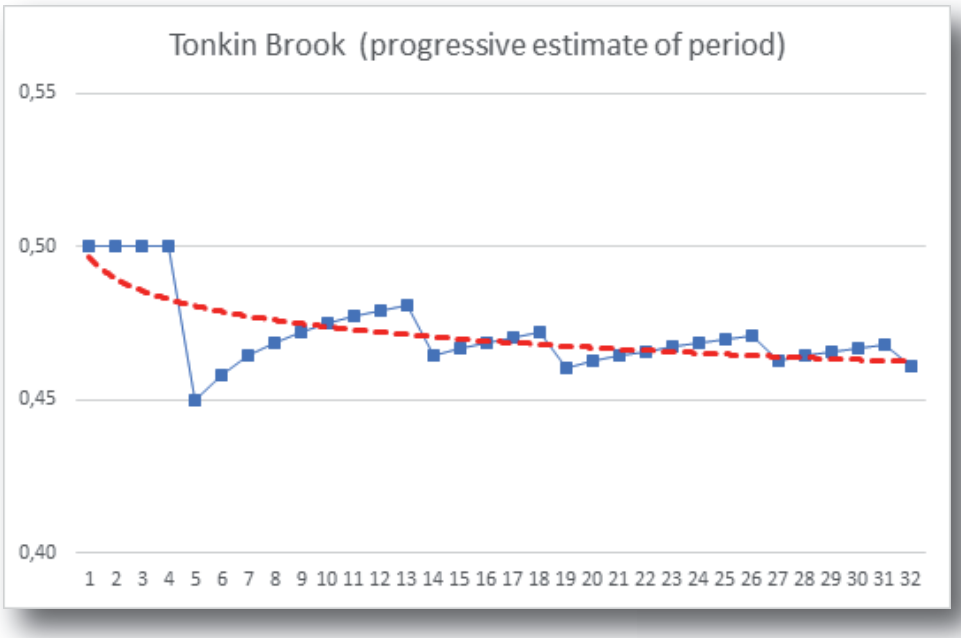
To estimate the constant period of the natural oscillation of the reed, the total progressive time to the Nth oscillation was read and divided by the number N of oscillations in the interval.

Obviously, as N increases, increasingly greater precision can be achieved. The complete experiment (video recording and data reading) was also repeated identically several times for each of the two rods. This allowed us to verify the overall good consistency of the measurements, and it is therefore legitimate to assume that, although the experimental setup is certainly not that of a professional scientific laboratory, the measured parameters nevertheless have a sufficient degree of accuracy, especially if our goal is simply to compare the two rods.





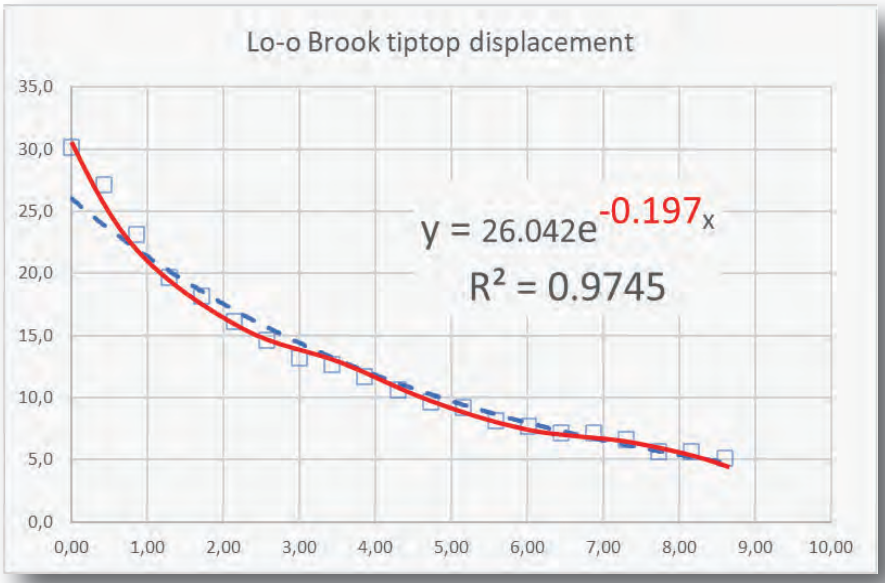
Rod in Lo-o, the horizontal scale represents the sequence of the first 32 oscillations detected by the slow- motion film (6x), on the vertical axis the period can be estimated in a progressively more accurate way.

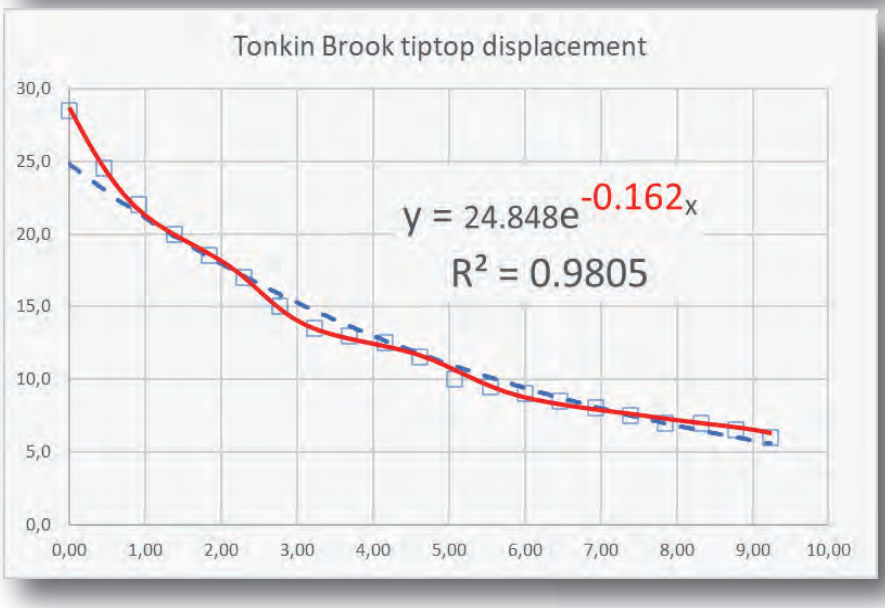


Tonkin rod, the horizontal scale represents the sequence of the first 32 oscillations detected by the slow- motion film (6x), on the vertical axis the period can be estimated in a progressively more accurate way.

As can be seen from the graphs, even after the 32 oscillations tabulated, the period estimate was not yet stabilized, so a curve was used to extrapolate the actual period. The analysis was repeated identically for the two rods, resulting in a slightly longer period for the Tonkin, 0.462 seconds versus 0.430 seconds for the Lo-O rod. It should also be noted that the two rods were assembled with the same components (bamboo ferrules, silk-bound coils, and varnish), resulting in approximately identical weights for the three rod parts.

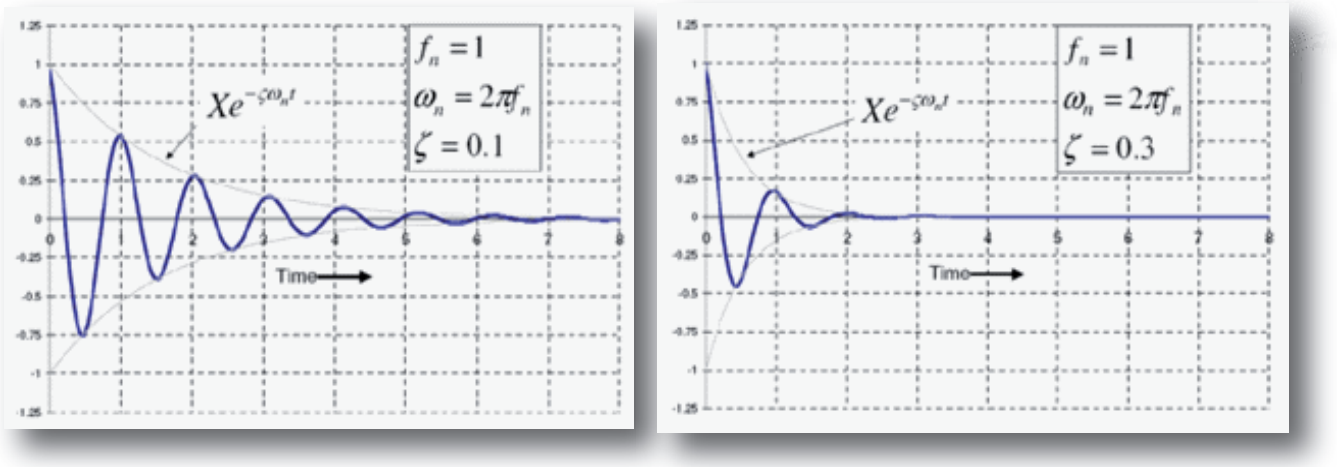
From the same slow-motion video sequence, using the gridded background of the images, the amplitudes of the first 35 oscillations were extrapolated in sequence. In this case, too, an exponential decay function was used to interpolate the direct measurements and allow for a more precise estimate of the damping





In both graphs, the horizontal axis represents the time in seconds from a reference oscillation peak. The vertical axis measures the amplitude of the oscillations in cm. The fluctuations observed around the exponential curve of the theoretical amplitude decay, highlighted by the solid red curve, essentially represent the interference of the different oscillation modes.

The behaviour of the two rods is once again quite similar, and both show reduced damping. We know from theory that the oscillation frequency depends on the elastic parameters and the masses, therefore on the weight distribution of the rod (which is determined by the average density of the material) and the accessories applied, but the damping of the oscillations does not actually depend on the elastic modulus.



Two notional examples of low (left) and high (right) damping

We already know from static bending measurements of the two real rods that both deviate partially from the result predicted by the predictive mathematical bending model. We explained this deviation by imperfect knowledge of the elastic parameters of the specific culm, but above all by the variability of elastic modulus and density along the individual planed strip, which is determined by how the variation in strip thickness interacts with the transverse variation in MOE and density between the external surface and the internal wall of the culm (this aspect was discussed in Part 1 of this article).

In essence, the composite nature of bamboo, consisting of vascular bundles (the Power Fibers) and pith (the Pith) with extremely different characteristics, yet which interact and integrate into a composite in which they are present in varying percentages, seriously limits the possibility of considering a single MOE value and an average density as fully representative of our material.

To this intrinsic complexity of the individual strip (often overlooked), we must add that the structure of the rod, with its six glued strips, generates further complexity and therefore makes it objectively difficult to obtain a complete and highly precise mathematical model of the rod's bending.

If we consider the uncertainty factors in the parameters and the possible systematic errors in the measurements, the differences found between the two rods are not objectively conclusive. It therefore seems reasonable to compare the performance of the two materials to the level of casting tests on the two finished rods, which will be covered in the third part.

The final part will also discuss some practical characteristics and specific aspects that emerged during the manufacturing process.

The forgotten element

by Giorgio Grondona

Who knows how many times you've said or heard: "I'll believe you when I see a donkey fly!!!"

Luckily, donkeys don't fly, so to observe, completely by chance, the inspiration for this "reflection," I had to find myself in an elevated position, a situation that occurred during the I.B.R.A. Meeting held in Belgioioso (PV) in May 2024. For this event, a room on the mezzanine floor was reserved, featuring large windows overlooking the internal courtyard of the prestigious building. The very large courtyard alternates between grassy areas, gravel and cobblestoned sections: what better opportunity to cast with the rods provided by the exhibitors?

The reasons that push you to cast with a rod can be different, simple curiosity, the desire to compare tools similar in length but different in action, trying to understand if the rodmaker who built it succeeded in improving a taper that didn't fully satisfy him, and so on.

As with every Gathering, we always try to dedicate some time to testing the rods, almost always resulting in "dry casting," and the Belgioioso Gathering was no exception. As already mentioned, the internal courtyard has been the scene of several "tests," where the participants have always been divided into two distinct categories. The first is made up of those who show up with the premise of not knowing how to cast, being self-taught at their first experiences, only to later discover that their awkwardness is more due to shyness/embarrassment than actual incompetence.

Those belonging to the second category... don't introduce themselves, certainly not out of rudeness, but simply because we all know them, always present at fairs, gatherings, or "themed evenings." However, both categories offer useful insights into their "flipping," whether they have a "rudimentary" technique or are effortlessly showing off their casting skills.

It's commonplace, in the pages of the Bamboo Journal, to discuss topics related to the construction of artificial flyfishing rods, but to cast/throw an "artificial fly" where a fish might snatch it (assuming you intend to use the rods we build for fishing), the rod alone isn't enough. The rod is part of a system that, to be useful for casting, must be completed with a reel containing a line that acts as a link between the angler and the fish... assuming the entire "manoeuvre" has been successful. Obviously, the line must also be equipped with a nylon leader!

Line, said like this it may seem vague so the fishermen with the fly have given it a name that is dear to them, for the French it is “la soie”, for those who speak English it becomes “the line”, for the Spanish it is the “cola de rata” and for us Italians it is the “coda di topo”(translator’s note - mouse tail because it tapers) and here we are again in the vague because there are different varieties of mice, to simplify I suggest dividing them into three groups:
1 Little Mice, the cute ones... until they sneak into the house and gnaw everything they come across!!!

2. Average rats, these ones let their sympathy flow into the sewers where they usually live!!!

3. Large mice, nutrias, to be clear…

Why divide mice into three groups? All of them, large and small, have tails! Of course, but of different sizes, proportionate to their size. The example was useful to me in order to get to "light" tails (small mice), medium tails (medium mice), and heavy tails (coypu). And even though mice are different sizes, they don't use their tails for casting. However, since they've lent us an anatomical feature to give a name to our fishing line, I thought it would be nice to talk about it... solidarity between animals... if you like...

We've filled in a few lines. Lines can be straight or curved, and those curves can have a single curve or multiple curves, a bit like a fishing line projected from a rod during casting. With a pencil, we can trace a mark on a sheet of paper, and with that mark, if it's a line, we can decide whether to draw a straight line, a curve, or a sequence of curves. The more easily the pencil glides across the paper, the more we'll be able to draw what we have in mind... exactly the same thing happens with a fly line.

A well-made tip and smooth paper aren't the only things that make drawing smooth: if the pencil's shape or size isn't comfortable for the fingers to grip, it'll be difficult to be precise. Similarly, the shape of the graphite lead—think of the pencils bricklayers use to mark boards or walls on construction sites—leaves a highly visible mark, but they're certainly not suitable for technical drawing.

Let's return to Belgioioso. In the first-floor lounge, we listened to the speakers who entertained the attendees with diverse topics, all aimed at improving or optimizing certain stages of bamboo rod construction. To fish with a fake fly and place the fake fly where there's supposedly at least one fish that might "attack" it, we must tie it to a nylon line that must be connected (I leave it up to you to decide how to make this connection) to the fly line, which must be housed in a reel that, once finally attached to the rod, will have completed the preparation of the necessary equipment for the casting phase. Let's return to the first-floor lounge and look out the window overlooking the internal court-yard and observe those who are casting with rods taken from the exhibitors' racks. You can tell me what you see, and what I saw I'll tell you in the next few lines.

I'll start by saying that I'd never had the opportunity to observe "casters" from above, and in Belgioioso I had confirmation that some "indications" that I thought I'd picked up while standing on the same level as the person casting correspond to reality. I'm referring to the importance of the fly line in enhancing a fishing rod or, on the contrary, compromising its performance, just as, I'm sorry to say (even if I'm an ass, I have my dignity... I don't like lying), the caster's skill also declines.

Of course!!! We all know the classification of fly lines, but not everyone knows that even with the same number of lines, the weight can vary; it will remain (and should remain) within a set tolerance. Certainly, many of us get a bit confused between the various profiles that fly lines can have... and with just these few things, finding the "right" line for the rod we want to use is not so easy.

The "right" line!!!? And the rod!!!? A carefully thought-out taper, perfect construction, impeccable finish, but... when casting, both inexperienced and expert anglers find it difficult to move, a "bump" forms on the line in the air... the loop tends to open, and at the end of the cast, the shot is difficult to get off the ground!!!

On grass or pebbles, and without a fly tied to the leader, it doesn't matter, but even if you're in Belgioioso, there's little to... rejoice about!

Impeccable finish, I was saying before, I was referring to the perfect paint job, the even more perfect wrappings, the wrappings, some are an "embellishment," others, the most important, serve to attach the line guide "rings" to the rod; if they are (also) called line guides, the reason is that their function should be to match the path of the line as faithfully as possible to the curve that the rod assumes when "forced" to cast, so perfect wrappings are okay, but the position in which we attach them is equally important... even choosing them among the many on the market should not be random!!!

It happens... oh, it happens... to the question:

"I just built such and such a rod, of such and such a length, which has a line of such and such a size, where do I mount the "guides"?"

Answer: "Look for Whatshisname's manual and use the system Whatshisname suggests"!!!

The question this poor donkey has been asking himself since he started planing strips, gluing them together, and using them for fishing is this:

"Given the same length and power, rods will have different curves depending on their action, so should the "guides" also be mounted in different positions depending on the curve?!!!

The answer seems obvious to me, so I take it for granted that "attentive" rodmakers have achieved excellence in this regard as well, but... there's that "hump" on the line that prevents it from cutting through the air as desired, the speed drops, the shot starts with difficulty or... doesn't start at all.

Observing from above allows you to have all the casting phases "under control," time seems to expand, everything appears slower and more usable, the various "frames" slip by more slowly—yes, that's the visual impression:

a slow glide, like a fishing line that doesn't slide easily through the rod guides...

Is it the fly line's fault or the "guides"?!!!

Simply the line; I'm sure you chose the "guides" carefully and put them in the right place!!!

There are so many fly lines (too many?!!!), trying them all is practically impossible. Things are made a little easier by taking advantage of other people's experience, perhaps even sharing your own...

Dream or reality?!!! We'll see, I've thrown the stone in the pond!!!

I'm amazed at myself, this time I'm struggling, and in any case, I have to close (even if this door remains open) as always:

"A donkey's braying
will not reach heaven."


Mosche al telaio Terenzio
Costruttori
Gianluca Fusari e Terenzio Zandri
www.silkflylines.net

IBRA GG at the 22th Sim Fly Festival 2025

by Saverio Pandolfi

The 22nd SIM Fly Festival took place on June 21st and 22nd in the picturesque setting of Castel di Sangro.

The festival, organized by the Italian Fly Fishing School, offered a wide range of activities and events for all flyfishing enthusiasts.

A large delegation of members was present at the IBRA stand: in addition to myself, and in no particular order: Silvano Sanna, Luca Marzi, Daniele Giannoni, Francesca Morisetti, Enzo Afri, Massimo Giuliani, and Siro Vescarelli, who also represented Dry Fly Only.

What can I say? Time flew by, and we never got bored. Even though there weren't many visitors, those who came to our table seemed genuinely interested. Enzo Afri put on a show, testing IBRA rods with impressive casts despite the wind. In fact, there was also a lesson in two-handed casting with graphite rods given by two English-speaking casters.

I'll leave room for the images, including a selection of handmade flies (without a vise) by Roberto Calzolari and some photos of another fly tyer who ties traditional salmon flies, also without a vise: both fantastic.

Among others, I was also struck by the works of Kelly Liedtke, an American artist who creates beautiful aquatic landscapes. Messori exhibited his books and some of his paintings.


Mosche al telaio

July 2005 ... July 2025

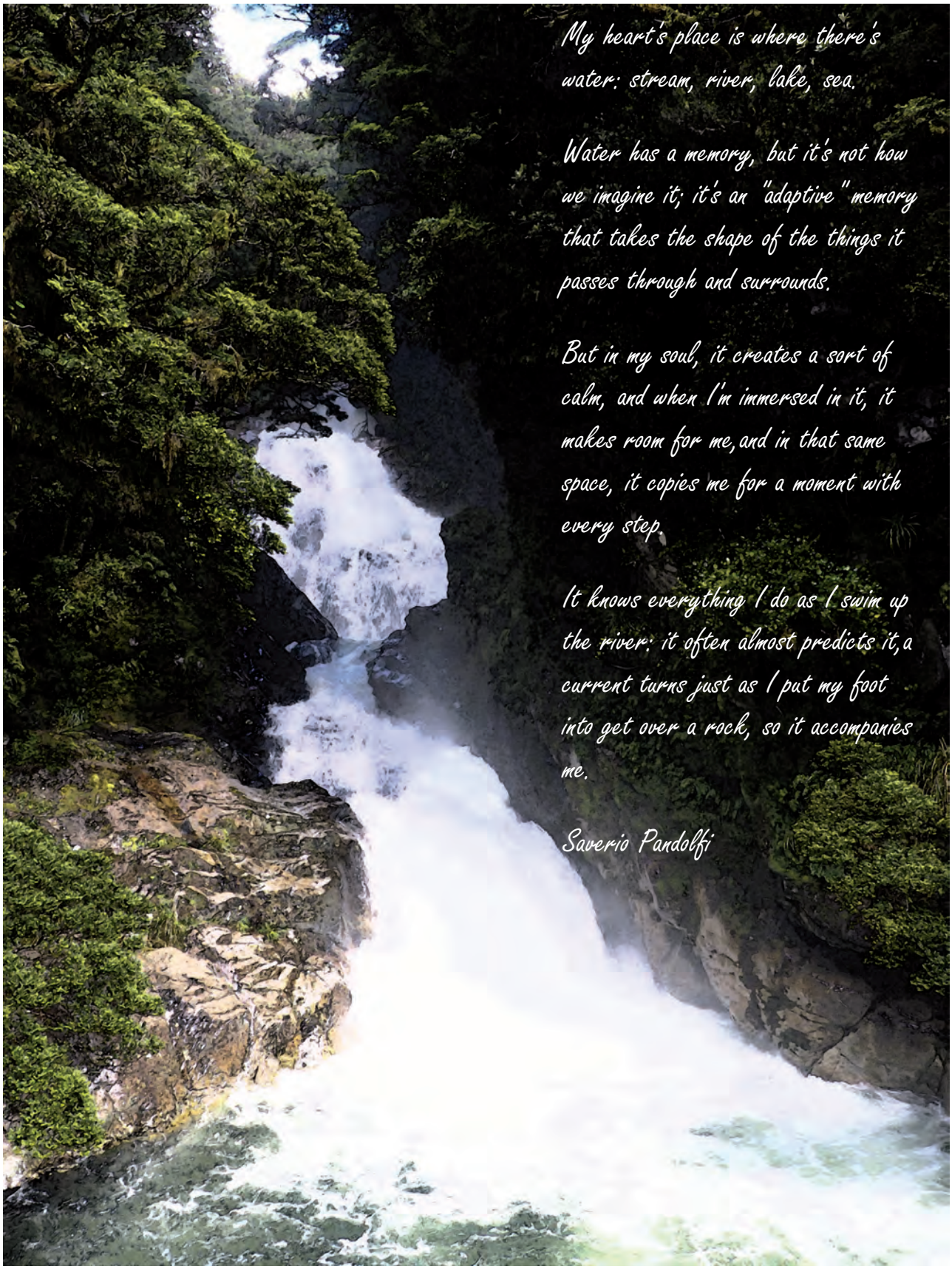
twenty years of IBRA

by Alberto Poratelli

There are moments in the life of an association that deserve not only to be remembered but also celebrated. The twentieth anniversary of IBRA's founding was therefore an opportunity to gather on the banks of the Tiber, in Sansepolcro, old and new members who, along with members of the Mosca Club Alto Tevere, celebrated the "birthday" of the Italian Bamboo Rodmakers Association Gabriele Gori.

IBRA was born right here, in Tuscany, from a happy intuition and the synergy with MCAT, which together ensured that they became the fulcrum of an era of fly fishing in Italy and, above all, the renaissance of bamboo. Old and new members of the two associations, members who had never even met in person, members who hadn't met in years, former members who wanted to be there anyway, all together for a fish in the waters of the TWT and for a convivial lunch magnificently organized by the Pro-loco of Santa Fiora.

Let's relive these beautiful moments in some images and... we'll see each other in July 2035 for the thirtieth anniversary.



My heart's place is where there's water: stream, river, lake, sea.

Water has a memory, but it's not how we imagine it; it's an "adaptive" memory that takes the shape of the things it passes through and surrounds.

But in my soul, it creates a sort of calm, and when I'm immersed in it, it makes room for me, and in that same space, it copies me for a moment with every step.

It knows everything I do as I swim up the river: it often almost predicts it, a current turns just as I put my foot into get over a rock, so it accompanies me.

Saverio Pandolfi

Newsletter e Bollettino
of Italian Bamboo Rodmakers Association

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