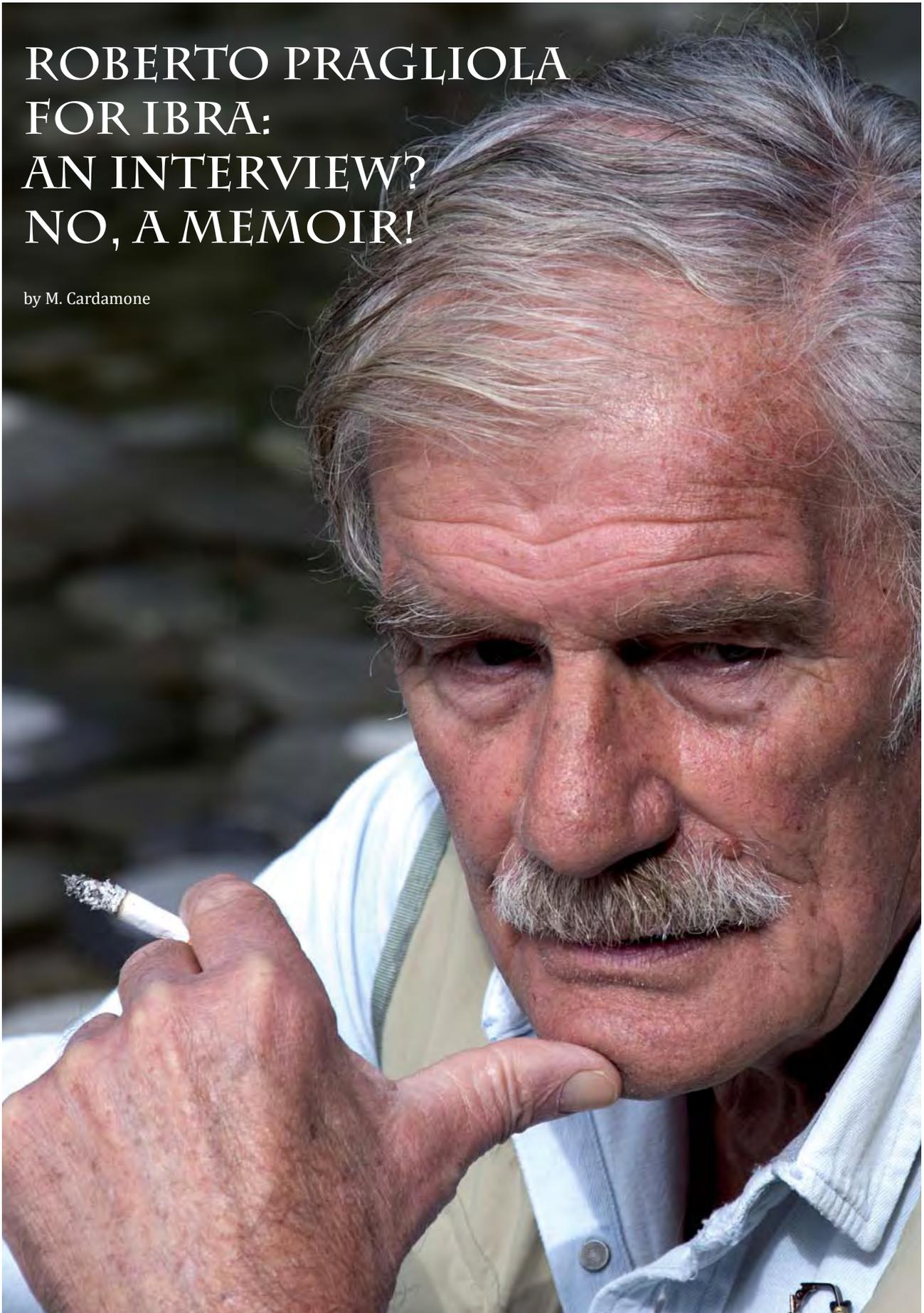
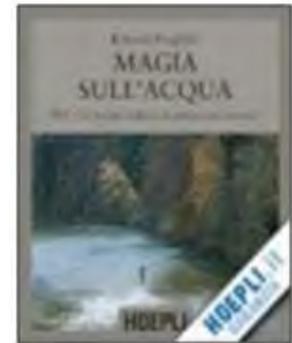
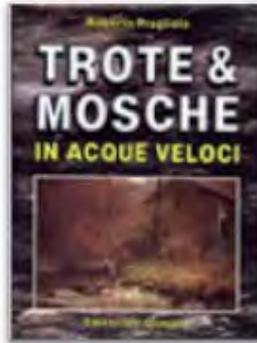
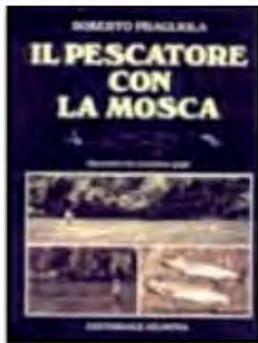
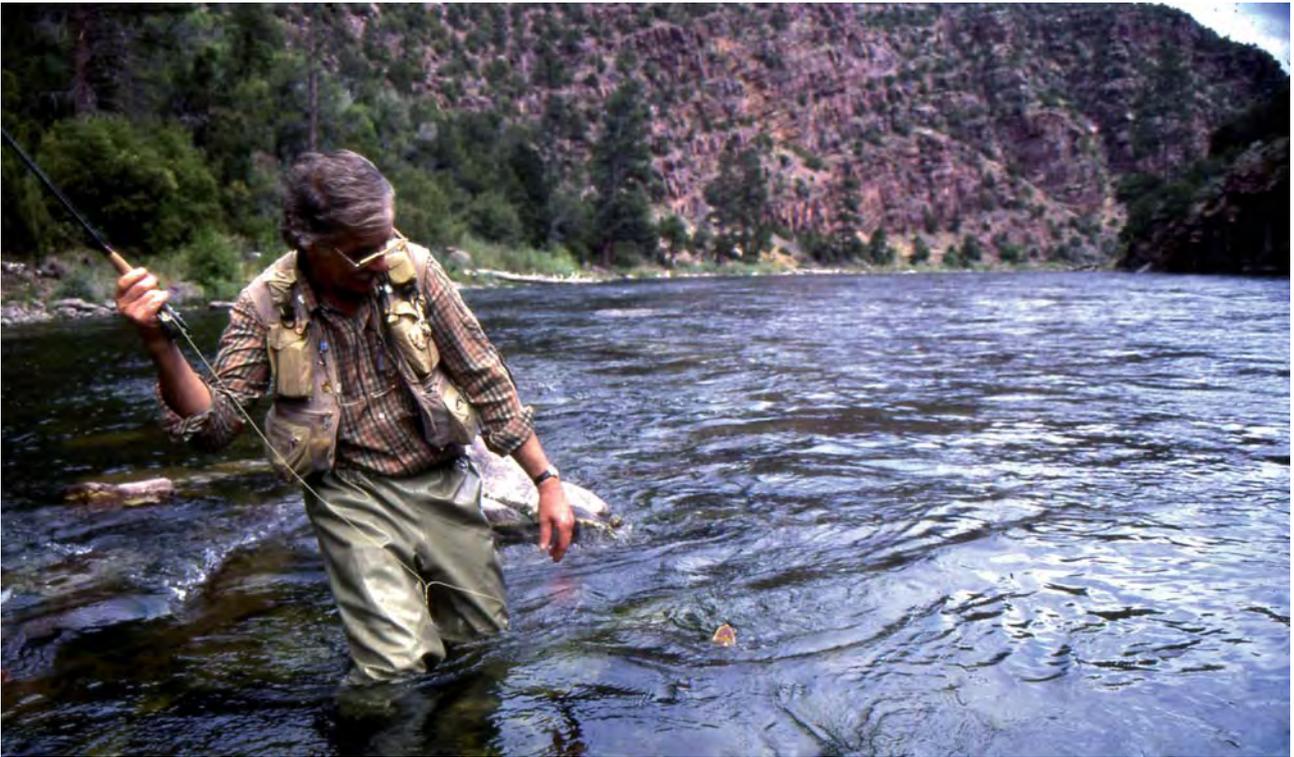


# ROBERTO PRAGLIOLA FOR IBRA: AN INTERVIEW? NO, A MEMOIR!

by M. Cardamone





*Q: Roberto, you are an icon of Italian flyfishing and not only. Your fame is tied, above all to the development of a casting technique which is innovative compared to the classic standards: the Technique of the Total Cast (TLT). I think that you and your long history of successes are known in the Italian bamboo rodmakers community. But I would like you to tell me briefly about your life as a caster and fly fisherman*

Maurizio, it is difficult to summarize a topic as complex and ample as the TLT. It might create misunderstandings. In fact, the concept of rod, the cast (its aim for fishing purposes), the approach to fishing itself and much more. However, I will try

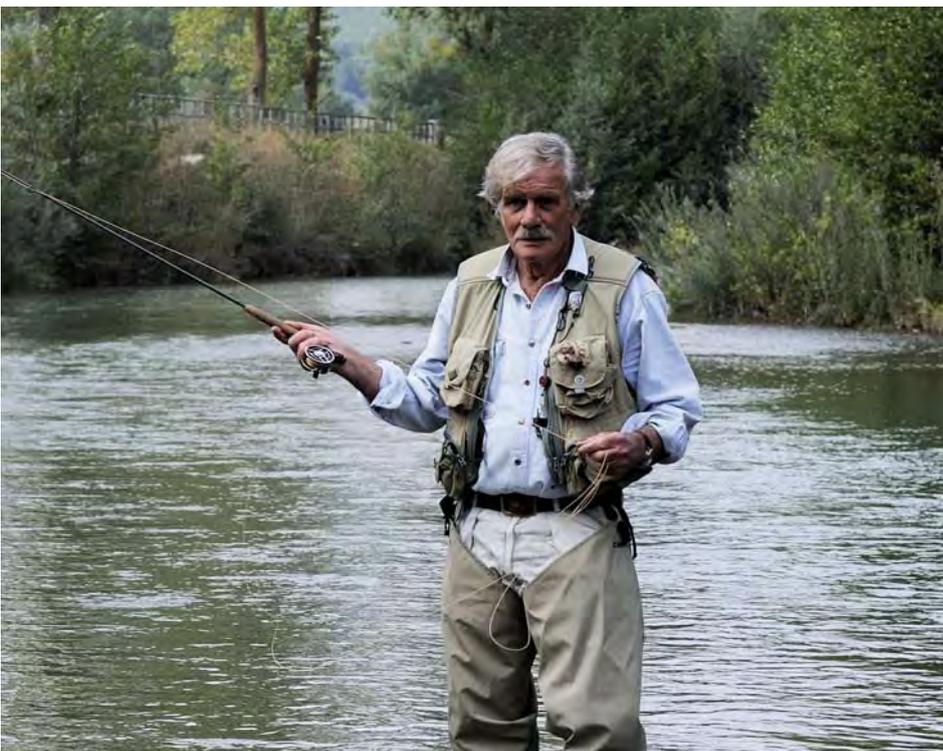


*Angled Cast, the basic cast of the TLT. This technique was officially born in 1976 (date of the first article published in the Italian magazine Pescare). Nonetheless, it is still considered "new". But if it is new nowadays, what was it then?*

*Q: Start by summarizing the true essence of the TLT dynamic, for the bamboo rodmaker and fishermen who will read us from other countries.*

TLT uses specific 7'6" rods and three weight lines projected at very high and very low velocities. Its dynamic is based on three points:

- 1) TLT has abolished the stops substituting them with no-stops. This is based on the principle of Constant Continuous Tensions. The result is a very fast line and always very taut.
- 2) The cast is not perpendicular as in the common techniques, but with the rod inclined at 45 degrees.



*This three quarters position is more natural compared to the rigid frontal position of the common techniques. And natural things are more functional.*

- 3) The entire movement is almost 180 degrees. It starts at ten/eleven o'clock and ends just after two o'clock
- 4) The wrist is not always rigid, but it flexes, bends, etc. according to the specific dynamic



*Position of the rod at the end of the back cast.  
The position of the rod so far back is facilitated by bending the wrist.*

- 5) The grip is different too. And the same applies to the position and pressure of the fingers on the cork



*The wrap around TLT grip, i.e. The rationalization of the use of the muscles. At the start of the back cast, the reel is in the fist and so the muscles are semi-relaxed. The back push moment is nervous and involves mostly the middle and index fingers that press the cork. Then the muscles relax again. Except for the thumb, that tenses to contrast and control the backwards movement of the rod.*

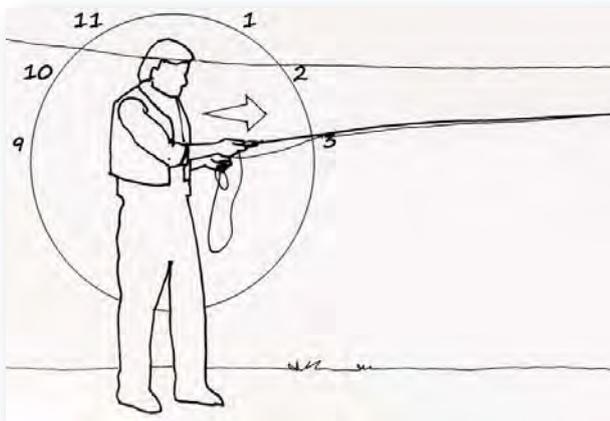
*With the start of the forwards cast (acceleration), the thumb plays a fundamental role, by pressing the cork more and more. It is important to respect this development. The apex of this pressure must coincide with the push moment.*



*The "out of focus" shows the intensity of the apex of the acceleration in the forwards cast.*

*A simple way to test if we have used our hand muscles correctly is to make some false casts while squeezing the grip and checking the "redness": the sign of how and where we have applied force. The intensity of the colour shows the points where the force was greater.*

6) Finally the push moment, the center of the cast, where all the movements of the line originate. The action is explosive and must only involve the tip, not the body of the rod. This movement consists in contracting the muscles to the maximum very quickly, in a very small space and thrust very far (about two o'clock, depending on the specific dynamic). Immediately the grip is loosened and absorbed. This maneuver is used for the back push moment as well as the forwards one and it consists of moving the hand forwards or backwards about ten centimetres or much more. This also depends on the specific dynamic. The difference between the back push moment and the forwards one is that in the back cast the velocity is usually progressive (but only in medium long distances), while in the forwards one it is explosive.



*General indication of one of many push moments in TLT. These movements are directly connected to the specific dynamic. The different trajectories (the various routes of the line in the air) arise from these movements, which in turn are connected to the settling and presentation of the fly. This is the reason the push moment in TLT are so many. They are small, often minute variations of the same gesture, but at certain levels a grain of sand has the same consequences of a boulder. (Drawing taken from *Magia sull'Acqua* by R. Pragliola ed, Hoepli, Milano)*

*During the forward acceleration, the velocity increases to its maximum. Only at this point of the hand muscles contract and this makes the push moment explode, thus transforming velocity into power. This movement, just like Kime in Japanese martial arts, can be defined as the focus of the maximum explosive power of the gesture. Like the arrival point of the fly, the tip (or part of it) in the water corresponds to that of the start when the hand releases the action (push moment).*



*Kime, similarities. Is there a connection between cast and personality? And then: is there a link between soul and gesture? And finally: can the beauty of a gesture be nullified by the result?*



*Back push moment. The action consists of a very fast but progressive movement in minimal space as seen in the photo. In the forward push moment the time and space are even less.*

*From the description it would seem that the manoeuvre (push moment + absorption) is composed of two distinct gestures. It is not so. They are simultaneous, as far as two opposite movements with opposite objectives can be. The push moment is very fast and charged with energy. On the contrary, the absorption is just as fast, but slowed down: its task is to dissipate energy and discipline it. The former produces oscillations on the tip (bounce), the latter annuls or reduces them to a minimum.*



*General indication of absorption in the back cast. The "out of focus" highlights the manoeuvre. These movements (absorptions) too, vary in extension according to the specific dynamic.*



<https://youtu.be/XJyHeECnq98>

*link to the video (website of the academy)  
"The angled cast".*

A video player interface showing a fly fisher in a river. The video title is "TLT il lancio angolato". The video player has a play button, a progress bar, and a volume icon.

*General indication of absorption in the forward cast.*



*The result of a TLT cast.*

*Q: After the brief description of the dynamic of your cast, could you summarize its peculiarities.*

TLT is not a technical truth, which can often be debatable, it is the reality of fishing: an objective fact. The condition it is based on is that the energy that a fisherman can produce, and before that, the energy that a regular fishing rod can transmit, are relative. Or at least, limited. And if we don't measure the centimeters, we have already reached these limits (distance). Thus I don't believe that for the little we have not scraped from the bottom of the barrel, the solution is looking for ever more powerful equipment burdened by high weights like we do nowadays, but rather, exploit (and conserve) better the energy produce Q: a path I think has never been considered and that TLT has instead made its own for almost forty years. To take advantage of this principal means a better result, even by using traditional equipment and weights, bamboo included.

The fact that TLT casts light lines must not surprise, the contrary should baffle us. It is amazing how to cover the short distances of a normal fishing cast, the usual techniques need such heavy lines (relatively speaking).

When we hear three weights, we immediately think of lines at the mercy of the slightest breeze, relative distances, floppy lines, wide and loose loops, inability to cast flies over a certain size and the difficulty to keep a sizable fish on the rod: i.e. the opposite of efficient equipment. To claim the contrary can cause perplexity, disbelief. Reasonable doubts, naturally, but they have the fault of referring to a cast with traditional equipment, a slender rod that moves the line slowly and loosely and not to a tough tool that casts tight and very fast like the TLT.



*Far cast with parallel lines (to the surface of the water). TLT does not mean force, a barbaric concept, it means lightness and speed. Pure technique.*

TLT uses seven and a half foot rods or little more with three weight double taper lines. With this equipment, this technique can obtain the same performance (fishing distance, keeping the fish, etc.) as tools of eight or nine feet and more that cast five or even six weight lines. TLT is a new way to approach the rod, the cast and fishing itself.



*We must always listen to the traditional fly because it is the "Fly".  
It's a pity a err so often.  
(photo by Vincenzo Penteriani)*

In fact the following are different:

- 1) the tool: light, manageable and quick
- 2) the cast, a complex and refined dynamic expression
- 3) the concept of the rod, no longer weak but definitely stronger than the traditional ones of the same length
- 4) the way to approach the tip (no longer considered an accessory) to which we have assigned a specific task
- 5) the objective of the dynamic of the cast for fishing purposes (another specific task) and much more

First of all, these peculiarities are possible due to the speed of the TLT cast, much higher than that of the usual techniques. In fact speed creates tension and it is the latter that allows us to use light lines, as well as to control the line and so the results of our actions.



*A casting technique based on excessive weight, insufficient speed and elliptical movements is a technical blunder, if not a constriction.*



From these peculiarities, together with an angled trajectory (angled towards the surface of the water), all the problems tied to fishing like precision, presentation, a gentle and quiet line and leader laid on the water etc. correspond to the intentions of the cast.

These are prerogatives that are linked to the dynamics of the cast and not to the equipment as most traditional techniques sustain.



*The angled trajectory, the origin of almost all the fishing problems.*

Consequently TLT resolves all the tactical problems without resorting to any particular instrument according to the fishing conditions (rods for flat waters, for larger rivers, for delicate presentations and so on), by taking advantage of the dynamics of the cast. The latter can be ignored (problems of fishing delegated to the instrument like in traditions techniques) or it can be exploited (solution of the problems using the dynamics like in TLT). So it can be hostile or favourable. It can be estranged from fishing or finalized to it. The casting technique will orientate you in one or the other direction. Otherwise what's the use?



New things scare mediocre people, men that instead of considering diversity a richness, see it as a danger. And the older the mediocre person is and the harder the war. And when the new thing is technically advanced the louder the war drums will be deafening.

But that's not all. This technique allows everyone and not only a few experts, to use any rod (little changes whether graphite or bamboo) with a line weight that is 3 or more times inferior to that declared by the manufacturer. For example a nine foot rod that cast a 7#, can be used with a 5#. Just as a 12 # can be used with a 9# or even less.

It is an error to consider TLT as a technique that is specific for light lines. And why so? A casting technique selects, codifies the rules of a succession of actions that have as the end result to project a line and to control its flight in the air. The equipment used to carry it out and the entity of the weight projected is something different and autonomous with respect to the technique used. This is even obvious. Even the old English casting technique, which was dynamically not excellent was able to cast both light lines as heavier ones. Therefore we do not understand why, for some unknown reason, the identical criteria should not be applicable to TLT. On the other hand, the latter has been defined by some as a technique which is suitable only for light lines. How can this mix up be possible – if it is really a mix up?

*Q: On various occasions, you claimed that with TLT you wish to push the use of new materials – essentially carbon fiber – that traditional techniques could not exploit to their full extent. Today we have seen the revival of materials from the “past”: not only bamboo, which find a reason to exist not only in certain characteristics tied to the action during casting but also in the pleasure to own a hand made item as an expression of extreme “artistic” excellence. Glass rods have reappeared quite powerfully and this takes us back to rods with very slow actions and therefore with actions quite similar to that of bamboo towards the middle of the last century and with very traditional casting techniques. How do you judge this apparent involution of the market? DO you think it can be defined as a marketing strategy to give a breath of fresh air to a rather slow and stifled market, or do you see deeper reasons perhaps tied to a process of maturation of the the flyfisherman?*

In my way of thinking a rod is the rifle of the fisherman and from both these instruments we must expect only performance and not misunderstood emotions. If a rifle or a fishing rod have not been chosen for their performance, there is something deeply wrong. In other words, the discerning person looks ahead, and those that do not know look at the past – including the market.

*Q: But what was the stimulus that lead to TLT?*

I confess that in the beginning I did not have very clear ideas. This might be surprising, but in those days I was not a student of casting and even today I do not consider myself as such. I just used to cast and that's all. I was in that passive mental state that is typical of when the instinctive chaos has not yet led to rationalization. To the point that no dynamic had ever surprised me nor affected me. I found them all normal. I might add natural. The maneuvers overlapped one after the other. Every fishing outing was enriched by something. It was a thrilling moment albeit confusing. In that moment I did not realize it but I was follow the same route taken over time by materials and equipment – both tending towards the research for a greater efficiency but not in the casting technique. When casting does not evolve together with the structure of the rods all ends by force into the arms of weight. Of an excess of weight. Not only to achieve distance, but even to approach a modest cast just is is demonstrated by the traditional casting techniques. On the contrary, when the equipment evolves together with the dynamics of casting, the results can only lead to the projection of light weight at high speed.

I have been fishing for almost 70 years. I began in Fiumablo, a small village in the Modenese area. It is here that I enjoyed my first trout at an age when it is still difficult to stand up. I fished with all techniques – bait (other times), spinning. A long and hard but fundamental apprenticeship.

I started fly fishing in 1967 after having attended a class in Florence even though prior to that I had tries with uncertain results. As with all fishermen of my generation, I began casting following the traditional English style and with bamboo rods, even glass rods that were very slow that cast relatively heavy lines (DT # 5/6). But this did not last long. Just the time to look around.

In those days, flyfishing was considers a very nice technique but full of limits: limited to a few months a year and only in wide open spaces. This was the most insidious limit because it excluded many waters. For example the smaller streams that were erroneously considered impracticable for fly fishing. This undermined the fundamentals of the system. What struck you immediately was the abyss between theory and practice.



*Areas covered with vegetation: places believed to be impracticable for flyfishing  
(Photo by Sergio Mastriforti)*

Hours and hours of practice to learn to stop the rod on the vertical, keeping the wrist completely rigid, the elbow kept close to the waist and so on (these were the rules dictated at the time in our country but even elsewhere) to then to be forced to do exactly the opposite once on the river. It was disconcerting to discover that one of the major obstacles for the diffusion of flyfishing, derived from casting, from a dynamic that hindered fishing by limiting its efficiency and therefore of the competence of the system without which it is impossible to practice this form of fishing. The contrast between the rigidity of the rules which concerned casting and the flexibility of the different situations and the consequent discomfort in facing them, could not be ascribed to personal gaps in casting. It was a paradox: man had created rules that instead of making things easy, created obstacles.



*Hours and hours of practice to respect the rules and to then to be forced to do the exact opposite once on the river.*

The result is easy to see: respecting the rules was a heavy price to pay to fishing since there was a drastic reduction of the places and situations to fish, while if you break the rules, you risk being pointed at. It was not a thing to be taken lightly. In those days there was almost an acquiescence with respect to the directives: a fact which derived from respect for the older fellows and to the bearers of the “conscience” in general.

As I said the contrast with the orthodoxy was even too evident – going down to the river with open eyes. While this assumed a dimension that was almost insane, it was in the small streams that TLT was born and developed. Never as in these places, did the rules of the English style with relative rods and actions give me the impression of a partial technique. As soon as it was taken out of context in which it was born, it seem appropriate only to hinder the casting. It was the negation of casting intended as an instrument to efficiently achieve any action in all places.

Notwithstanding this, it continued to be taught for many years to come. So very soon I found myself in contrast with the “word” and I was forced to throw away everything I knew. A little confused in the beginning, I took another direction: a process that led me to use lighter lines and to cast them progressively faster and faster and after the arrival of carbon fiber rods I move to shorter and shorter rods. This was the first step.

The second and determining step, is also conducive to graphite – faster rods. Naturally inclined towards line speed, I was ill at ease with bamboo rods and glass rods and later also with the first graphite rods which, in brackets, were very lacking.

Another reason for discomfort was the weight of the line to be cast. I found it excessive almost like ballast. But before that, albeit a little hazily, I considered it a handicap with regards to the cast. On top of it all, the graphite rods in those days cast lines that bent them until they “knelt” down. A characteristic still present in many American rods: excessive line weight, lacking velocity – two consequent factors that invariably led to the birth of TLT.

Once I had taken this path, I stopped having conflicts with the “creed”. On one hand I had pushed to far ahead, I was practically without hope of redemption. On the other hand, the more I ventured into the profane, the more I felt like someone that had discovered that hell does not exist. I stopped considering things true or false. No fact was consecrated. I lived as if for all I had learned there was non conscience, just like what happens in nature, only what is about to arrive is sacred. There can be no prudence in this phase. Not only because prudence can create subtraction and this is not part of my character, but also because a pioneer cannot be prudent. It is a contradiction in terms. These statements today may seem disconcerting – even excessive. And so I repeat: in this days there was almost an acquiescence regarding the directives. Having said this I had not yet reached the conclusion that the traditional technique was not valid. I believed that is was so in certain places. I believed that it was not in others. Thus the confusion I mentioned.



*The cast from hence the logo of TLT. In the day, this cast created sensation.*

*At the beginning of the 70's it seemed impossible to cast a line so straight and taught. And it was carried out with a bamboo rod. To be exact a 7'6" by Pezon et Michel, the Vario Power, with a bamboo tip and a glass butt.*

This my evolution, was even more difficult in those days also because in our country there was only a sketchy knowledge of casting and as is usually the case when ignorance dominates, the various opinions multiply like rabbits and everything and the opposite of everything is mixed in a large cauldron in which everyone can take handfuls with fear of contradiction. At the same time and consequently, the more the ideas are mixed up, the more we tend to create rigid rules and to dilate their importance abnormally. In other words – chaos.

They were times when the fishing line had to move through the air charmingly and they even boasted about it. Lazy lines, sleepy rhythms. Loops that trudge on pitifully. Tailing loops. Minds that were closed and apathetic. Thus hostility, almost ferocity towards something new; towards something different. In fact I paid the price. There is no harder skin than the one we are born with or that conditions you like the milk from the breast that we feed on. It was surprising to listen to so many discussions even about insignificant things without anyone ever questioning fundamental issues. For example the excessive line weight.

*Another reason for discomfort was the line weight. I considered it to be excessive. And even harmful in shallow waters.*  
(Photo by Sergio Mastriforti)



The “discovery” of high speed, I mean the way to produce it, was the fil rouge of the entire process. Although the first attempts were made with bamboo rods, the significant moment was determined by the appearance of graphite. Contrarily to what happened with the traditional techniques in which the appearance of graphite (with respect to speed), in my opinion passed on without significant changes, for TLT, the contribution given by this material made it literally explode. Velocity gave it completeness and meaning. I dare say it gave it legitimacy. Without this velocity, TLT could not have expressed its true dimension nor the same efficiency.



*An angled cast carried out at high velocity. If the projection of the fly without weight allows the cast to express its maximum technical level, line weight, friction condition it drastically precluding whatsoever significant evolution.*

*Q: These are the origins, now explain briefly what the practical value of TLT is.*

There is no sport in which evolution did not coincide with lightness and velocity. Consequently the opposite – weight and low velocity, two peculiarities of the traditional cast, can be considered limitations and symptomatic of a stage of a system that has evolved little.

Although the classical equipment is non very functional and verges on the paradox, new ones are continuously manufactured. It is evident that they are conscious of the advantages of using light lines. It is not coincidental a light line is considered ideal for the more difficult conditions like slow and shallow waters. Unfortunately as long as the traditional lightweight equipment is conceived with the current criteria, the “real fishing equipment” will continue to be the kind that projects lines that are more or less heavy. Looking at this situation, this more than a choice seem like a constriction.



*It is completely useless to look for solutions that the equipment will never give. The instrument is only a means that can give any result and in fact it depends on how you use it. Or better on the casting technique used.*

This technique resolves all the tactical problems in your approach and presentation of the fly non through the use of particular instruments different according to the situation but through the dynamic of the cast. The pivot that can rationally and efficiently set up the “fly fishing system”. Therefore a drastic limitation in the number of possible instruments.

The TLT rod is an instrument 7' 6" or slightly longer. It is a thin rod but at the same time fast and strong. It looks like a twig while in reality it is a stiletto. It can cast efficiently and tame even big fish. And it can do both these things with deadly efficiency. So much so that TLT is the most efficient instrument for flyfishing.

Thanks to TLT, the light equipment is no longer a whim, to show of now and then for fun. It is not even integrative, in the sense that it is used only when approaching conditions that are particularly difficult, especially if the yard stick used to evaluate the things is the result.

With TLT, the reason for which heavy lines (quantity of weight) were indispensable no longer exists. In order to verify this, ask yourself which is the process, if it exists, of the role of weight in a usual cast. For example, let's begin by asking if there is a proportion between the entity of the weight and distance during a cast. One needs to inquire whether the negative side that weight determines justifies the result. These questions can be synthesized in only one: : do the usual techniques that usually use the quantity of weight which is necessary for the intention (distance and not only) have a limitation of the effective utility? I would say no and I believe that TLT demonstrates this.



*Those who know about casting , cast. Those with less ability just talk about it. Those who have even less ability, destroy the cast with an infinity of structures. Those that cannot cast only criticize*

Using the quantity of necessary weight is fundamental. Also because the remaining part is only useless ballast Using a surplus of weight demonstrates that the effective necessary quantity is unknown. Thus the proof of the absence of a rational fundamental capacity to identify with precision the effective necessary quantity. In two words, the traditional cast is not guided by by a logic and in fact it uses weight indiscriminately. There is a big difference in weight, in handling and so in the results, between a tool consisting of a seven and a half foot rod with a number three line and a traditional eight or nine foot that casts a much greater weight. The weight (rod + line) is the handling's worst enemy. Weight, handling and results are essential and inseparable elements.

Lastly, the most common objection towards light lines: the wind. Undoubtedly a heavy line penetrates the wind better. Unfortunately it is not the case for the leader which remains behind, nullifying the role of the weight, emphasizing its limits and at the same time, the advantages of the speed. On the contrary, a very fast, taut leader, will succeed where slack projections fail.



*The very fast lop of TLT, the creator of many of the advantages of this technique, including that to make the leader pierce the wind more efficiently than heavier lines expressed at lower speeds.*

The overwhelming novelty of TLT, gave rise to a scandal like a blasphemy in the mouth of a child. And my first two book did not calm the controversy. In fact the second book, "Trota e mosche in acque veloci" (Editors note . Trout and flies in fast waters), only contributed to heat up the criticism. The many casting demonstrations did not help: not even the evidence of the facts helped. It is not easy to bring forward your ideas in solitary. In certain European countries, on the other hand; baptized the TLT immediately as "The Italian style".



*The usual techniques represent part of the dynamic expressions of this system of fishing, TLT the totality.*

The trajectories are the “instruments” that allow you to present your fly in many ways in the most efficient way to resolve every single situation. Projecting the line in parallel lines, equals using one single trajectory, thus only one presentation or almost: always the same even in the great variety of situations.

A trajectory is none other than the “line” traced by the line in the air in whatever form and velocity as long as it maintains tension in its whole length and for the whole trajectory. The trajectories that are finalized for fishing are theoretically two: the parallel and the angled casts. In reality the first one is unequivocal and has uncertain and approximative results. The second one is the exact opposite.

There are no limits to the range of presentations, unfortunately they are written on water and not easy to see if our eyes and minds are completely occupied in scrutinizing the slight differences in colour between two flies in a vise like most fishermen do. If in our fly boxes we had a few model less and in our casting a few more types of presentation, we would have better results in fishing.



*There is not one “truth”, not even the most consecrated. Only facts exist.*



Dynamic elasticity, the peculiarity that allows TLT to mold the cast to the fishing requirements. For example the silence of the presentation of the fly or the thousands of ways to present it: that world that in its vastness I have defined “The universe of presentations of the fly”. One of the strong points of this technique.

Knowing how to read the different velocities of the currents and to interpret them correctly is fundamental for choosing the most ideal cast to combat drag. Reading the ideal and correct interpretation of the surface movements of water is important, as is equally important choosing the correct presentation.



*It is not important that the fly travel great distances. In fact it makes no sense. What is fundamental is that it behaves well during a brief specific drift (rise, hot spot).*

On the crest of many of these water movements, there is often the answer to many questions that are sought at the tying vise. Here is hidden the cause for many inexplicable lost battles that are often attributed to that rare feather or whatever else. Here is hidden part of that mystery that fascinates us from our first catch or miss: for what reason does a trout reject a fly and instead takes a second one which is almost the same as the first one? A question that spaces in many directions, that has been researched in many famous alchemies but never within the folds of the surface. Are you sure that things are really like that? That the torment of a new material, a new feather etc., this authentic paranoia is not just the demonstration of the oldest flaws of a fisherman: the knowledge of the surfaces. Too often, in fishing something new corresponds to knowledge of the old.



*One of the many maneuvers of TLT: the fly is placed before the tip. This part of the leader will prevent drag.*

In any case, do not ask why a trout has rejected a fly to then take another similar to the previous one but rather ask for what reason a trout has rejected a fly to take another that “according to you” is similar to the previous one. Otherwise it's like saying that what is different for us, not only is different for the fish but also that the evaluation of these differences are the same for both: this is quite frankly an astonishing albeit dominant consideration.

In past times, there were few fishermen and the flies were very dissimilar to the natural ones. This macroscopic difference was therefore the primary cause of the mistrust. As the flies improved, to the trout they appeared very similar to the real ones and the trout had more difficulty in distinguishing the two so they had to resort to other tricks to discover the hoax. The trout discovered well before the fisherman, what can be considered his greatest flaw: that is the way in which a fly is presented and the so called “drift” which has remained unchanged over time. The fish has therefore changed its attention to the way the fly behaves on the water, to its presentation and to everything that precedes its appearance and everything that happens around it. These are elements that are part of the universe of the presentation of the artificial fly and therefore of the cast.



*The “superimposed” cast, which is one of the most interesting maneuvers of TLT serves to present the fly under overhanging vegetation and in other versions to contrast drag. In the circle – the fly.*



*It is more probable that a fish accepts a dodgy fly with respect to the natural but that is fitting, I would dare say in symbiosis with the fishing spot than the contrary. Every fishing spot leads a fish, or rather forces it to “different times of reaction” in accordance to its characteristics. Faster reaction times in covered spots (the fish has partial vision of the situation) and slower reaction times in open spaces (the opposite). In the first case the trout attacks the fly rather than taking it. It is an instinctive fact and therefore carried out much quicker than when it can ponder things when it sees the fly from a distance.*

*(Photo by Sergio Mastriforti)*

Environmental distractions and the needs of the trout find their best solutions in the dynamics of casting i.e. that can be considered our most efficient “fly”. The main creator of these results is the Angular trajectory – the basic cast in TLT. This trajectory is the dynamic solution of almost all the fishing problems. It creates a connection between the plane in which the fisherman operates and the surface of the water - starting with precision. It is also what separates and distinguishes TLT from the traditional techniques. Its opposite, the projection that gives us inversely opposite results is the parallel trajectory - the basic cast of the usual techniques. The angular trajectory is equivalent to a variable inclined plane on which you slide now slowly and then rapidly or even very rapidly our flies in order to present them to the fish in the best possible way according to the situation. It is also what we base many of the anti drag maneuvers.



*The angular trajectory give you a direct visual of your target. On the other hand, the other or parallel trajectory forces the fisherman to transfer his objective (the rise) from the water (the plane on which the fishing action develops) and to focus the objective onto a vague place in space. A complex procedure in which the result does not depend on the dynamic of the casting technique but rather on the ability of the person and in spite of the technique. Unfortunately and contrarily to a finalized dynamic, ability is not an absolute fact. It always encounters a certain number of errors.*

If velocity is opposed and at the same time and contrarily, the fast materials ( high modulus, lines that are structurally fast etc) are well regarded, it is evident that the problem is not given by the velocity, but by its use which can be re conducted to lacking casting techniques of the person. It is therefore a personal problem. Where does velocity come into the picture?

Maintaining that TLT projects very taught lines both at high velocity and also in the opposite way, as indicated earlier, would seem a contradiction. Let's clarify immediately.

Let's see the relationship between tension and velocity – two things that are closely correlated. Let's make an example: Take a pole and at one end attach a thin strip of sufficiently long textile. Something that is vaguely similar to our rod and line. If we move it to and fro simulating when we cast a fly with traditional methods, including the stops, the strip of material will straighten out. If you slowly reduce the velocity of the movement, the tension will diminish until it stops and the material will sag. On the other hand, at low or even lower velocity, there should be no tension and therefore no “control”. In reality, things are quite different.

Let's repeat the experiment by moving the pole without the two stops, i.e. with continuous motion just as we do in TLT. We even moving the the pole at low velocity, the material straightens out. Perhaps little but it does not sag. We can therefore say that a certain level of tension exists even a low or very low velocities on condition that there is a Constant Continuous Tension: the so stop criterion on which TLT is based.



*Line tension in a long cast. A result which is achieved by very high velocity. However it is not sufficient to know how to produce velocity; this must be kept for the whole distance of the cast. AN the long it is, the more difficulty there is.*



*Progressive Velocity. This is typical of a traditional cast.*



*The look of explosive velocity in TLT.*



*In the collective imagination of the fisherman, the softness in placing a fly (but also silence of the line), has always been associated with a fly that fluctuates sweetly down and therefor with a line that has had a parallel projection. Vice versa a very fast fly directed toward the surface is synonymous with violence both for the fly ( that pierces the water brutally) as for the line (noise on impact). Consequently velocity and angulation are considered negatively. Nothing could be more wrong. It is difficult to contrast ideas that are so well set.*



*Limits? There are no limits. We create our own limits. The great tension created during a very high velocity cast. Even so the presentation of the fly is perfect. But this also demonstrates what we have affirmed earlier when we said that a very taught nylon will penetrate the wind better that one that sags and projected with heavier lines.*



*The under the tip TLT cast. It doesn't serve much to know the scientific explanations of how to achieve the maximum velocity in casting just as it serves little to know which maneuvers and muscles are used to achieve it. Because the velocity does not lie in the muscles but in the mind. And if we don't train our minds beforehand, it is impossible to make your muscles react.*



*Detail of the loop in the previous maneuver.*

*Q: The whole world uses lines that you consider heavy. Even so no one seems to complain. Does this not frighten you a little? What can you tell us about this?*

A rod is just an tool to carry out a specific activity. Whichever tool, from a hammer to a scalpel, whatever use it is destined for, if it has to be functional must necessarily answer to a specific primary requirement: it must be manageable. This it must be light. The contrary would lead to the conditioning of a certain type of movement and this in proportion would affect the result. Consequently it will not be an efficient performer of our will. The same happens with a fishing rod. But in this case to what weight am I referring to?

The tool to play tennis is a racket and for golf it is the club. To evaluate their weight I presume it is sufficient to place them on a scale. Vice versa when we are talking about fishing, the weight in question cannot only be that of the rod i.e. it will be the weight of the rod plus that of the line. More the latter than the former and certain not a static evaluation, or on a scale but during casting. Because it is the weight of the line, which is displaced above and so far from our hand that affect most and that conditions our movements by rendering the tool so little manageable.

It is a little like in fencing. One thing is managing the foil, another the sword. In the first case in virtue of a very light weight, the point of the foil, just like that of a TLT rod, does exactly what we want and immediately responds to our impulses. In the sword, the weight conditions the movements reducing the velocity and the number of possible maneuvers. The difference between a foil and a sword, lies in the fact that the first one offers velocity in execution so so it is manageable but not powerful. For the sword is is mostly the opposite. Furthermore the weight determines that these two arms (foil and swords) be maneuvered with different techniques. More refined the first, rudimentary the second. Not by chance, the great fencing artist who was Giulio Gaudini, perhaps the best Italian fencer, considered the sword to be too easy. Characterized in fact by rudimentary maneuvers. Between foil and sword, you have the same differences that you have between TLT (foil) and the traditional technique (sword). With one difference. Based on its characteristics a TLT rod e at the same time light, maneuverable, quick and powerful. It is at the same time a foil and a sword.



*By virtue of a reduced weight, the point of the foil does exactly what we want and instantly responds to which impulse we apply to it.*

Weight is at the origin of other problems with the accomplice of the way certain tools are conceived. Because it is the flexure, the degree and intensity with which the rod flexes that more than one problems arise. In fact the more the rod flexes, the more the fisherman needs to go along with it, moving the rod not like he would want, or better in the way that the fishing situation would require, but according to the action of the rod. When a rod forces us to adapt to the way it flexes, it is no longer some that is at our service and even less the executor of our will.

I repeat a rod is only an instrument that must execute what is necessary in the best possible way: an objective that can be obtained only if the instrument does not hinder our operations. There is no sector from wrought iron to music, in which the result does not depend from the instrument. And there is no blacksmith nor musician that is not prepared to choose the most appropriate instrument. It is surprising that in fly fishing, the opposite is the case.. However if we express a rough and approximate dynamic along parallel lines, the excess in weight will not count much. Even a drum makes a noise but between this and affirming that it is music there is a big distance.

*Q: Why do you give so much importance to the casting?*

Fishing is an instinct, observation and reasoning. The first of the three things can be sufficient but no one can do without casting.

For me the rod and the casting are important. You rodmakers only to the rod. Or at least so it seems. Casting has always been underestimated, at least for a certain period. It is fair that it assumes the role that competes it. I think I can attribute this to me. At least in this country.

The path that the fly travels from the moment it is placed on the water until it reaches the spot where the fish is can be divided into two parts. The first one consists in the space that goes from when it lands on the water until just before it is seen by the fish. The second part is from when the fish rises to take it. This second part is a very limited time and can be effectively considered the "personal space" of a fly, in which its capacity to catch, whichever they are have the possibility to show what it is worth.



*Long rod or short rod? Light weight or heavy weight? In whichever way you think about this, there is a difference between these two concepts and it is symptomatic. Behind the choice of a short fast rod that casts light weights, a part from the elegance and beauty of the action, there is also sportsmanship. In the other only opportunity a lacking casting techniques.*

But the point is not even this. The way in which the fly is presented in the visual cone of the fish is the last ring of a chain in which casting consists in the summit. In fact:

- 1) the manner in which the fly is presented to the visual cone of the fish depends (can depend) from the way the fly drifted in the first part of its journey.
- 2) this way, in turn, is the consequence (can be the consequence) of the way it was laid in the water.
- 3) this last quality finally derives (can derive) from the way the line was projected and therefore on the cast. In fact it is sufficient (it can be sufficient) to execute a wrong cast to lay it badly and let it reach the fish even worse.



*Everything is written on water; all that is needed is to know how to read it. In these motions there is the answer to whichever fishing problem. Those who fish in rivers with few fish know all about it especially if the fish have a great fishing pressure. Fisherman have stopped concentrating exclusively on the fly because not only what happens in an area of 2 meters around the fly is important, more often it is the most important thing, more important than the fly but even more often there can be more differences in a square meter of surface than between fly and another fly.*

*(Photo by Vincenzo Penteriani)*

It seems evident to me that the catching capabilities of that fly to which we have dedicated maniacal attention, depend on the casting. These capabilities can be undermined even before they have had the possibility to come into play, so much so that whatever happens to the fly before meeting the fish can invalidate even the best flies. It is not always like that naturally. There are times when a clumsy cast has no negative consequences. Or more in general, in waters where casting has less importance. But these are exceptions. That is why I sustain the fact that casting the link between the binomial fish-environment and the actions that a fisherman carries out to approach both in the best possible way. It is the “natural” issue, the rational issue on which TLT is based. A way of looking at fishing that has deep roots in the water.

If “reading the velocity of the currents” is fundamental to fight drag, “reading the surfaces! Is just as important with respect to the best presentation of the flies. This last choice in fact depends also on the character of the surface in the fishing spot. Therefore even the presentation of the fly is born from the water. Any casting manifestation is the consequence of the movement of the water.

*Q: You have said many times that the traditional techniques invalidate ability. A strong comment. What does it mean exactly?*

TLT is speed, light lines and angulation. What do you need velocity for? What do you need angulation for? Why light lines? These would seem like many questions but in reality it is only one question. Without velocity (consequently without tension) there can be no angulation. Without angulation, goodbye trajectories. Then all is left is the parallel trajectory. The usual one. So almost only one way to present your fly This is very trivial and inefficient.

All fisherman agree on the importance of ability. Just think about how the fly land and is presented. In my days, but probably even today, these factors were considered so difficult that it could take years of experience. And so the question is: which role does ability play and in what does it consist if we abandon the fly to its own means in the air to the mercy of fate like happens in the traditional techniques? What difference in results can there be between an expert and a novice since they both place their flies in the same way. They both project the lines in the same way, lines leader fly are placed on the water in the same way. Both dynamics are equal and identical and therefore so are the results. Based on which assumption can we say that the presentation of the expert is better than that of the novice? What changes is the experience in fishing and the choice of flies, naturally between an expert and a novice there is a chasm. The movement of the line in the air varies. One is fluid the other is clumsy. Variations But that's all and it could be no different. Is this the much praised presentation for which you need years of experience. Is this the ability to cast what many fishermen brag about? Is this the source of so many catches as was sustained years ago, but even today?

What role does ability play in the traditional cast? How do you make it stand out? What can be done so that it will give the fruits we expect and rightly demand? Unfortunately these techniques leave no space to ability and even less to fantasy. Some people can have fantastic talent but without the right instruments which are light lines and velocity they will always express mediocrity.



*Paraphrasing the great mathematician Hoyle, we can only say: "If within a traditional casting technique that sustains orthodoxy, there was not the immense pressure of conformism and marketing, we would be almost blind if we did not see the misinterpretation of weight".*



*The majority; the most uncompromising dictatorship.*

There are fishermen who instinctively know from how a trout moves from the hunting spot it has chosen, how to give the best presentation to tackle it. Pity that these good fishermen are forced to tackle these fish all in the same way. Or to renounce too many opportunities because their technique does not offer the correct instruments. There are others that handle a rod with mastery but their ability is mortified by their technique. Casting is not a primitive instrument that emits a single sound (ie the parallel trajectory or little more) but it is a symphony with a thousand sounds. A rod is not the bottom of a glass with flat reflexes. It is a diamonds. Light explodes. It radiates subtle iridescence.

Pity that these fishermen are forced to use it in one tone. Pity that these talented fishermen and casters see their ability compressed – at times humiliated. Without doubt you can catch fish even with a traditional technique. If you are happy with the result it is OK. Just as there are waters in which just a few different casts are necessary. Even just a few presentations.

From here, for some and for those who cultivate mediocrity – the partial importance of casting. How many lost opportunities! How many satisfactions thrown to the wind! How much beauty lost! Pity! Pity cultivating only the slack and repetitive straightening of the line to and fro. Renouncing to new emotions, banning the infinite horizons. Is there a worse humiliation to find that you are old and done nothing else but repeat the same gestures? And then we say that fly fishing is an art. But in which art can there be this repetition? Art is inventive. Fantasy. Nothing to share with a line and a leader that are placed always in the same way, of a fly that is always placed at the same level and in the same way. This is not art ma rather a tedious boring bureaucratic and challenging job. At these levels and in this guise, I consider casting tedious and boring.

On the other hand TLT exalts ability and at the same time its merciless objectiveness is pitiless towards mediocrity. And mediocrity is always evident in the traditional technique and ability can be admired in all its beauty in TLT. TLT never knows any moments of sadness and melancholy. No day passes in which the past and the present are confused because they represent the same gestures repeated infinitely: all so similar and sad. With the ability that is expressed with lines that are cast at high speed, there are no goal nor limits, but rather a series of peaks, each one more difficult than the previous one and many more still be discovered and conquered. At the same time the souls and the minds of those that do not settle for second best, stuck in sagging and tedious parallels, can finally ride endless grasslands of their fantasy. - the exhilarating emotions of infinite adventures.



*TLT: we can know it because we have heard of it. Or know it and reject it. In both cases contrast it. Even insult it. But we can evaluate it without prejudice and pass form insult to respect.*

*Q: In your opinion what are the basic assumptions in the conception of a rod?*

A rod is only an instrument that must execute what we require in the best possible way. In order to carry out this role, the instrument must necessarily be made with a specific visual of casting in mind. In the past it was so, today I don't think so.

For the traditional techniques, casting has always been considered a direct emanation of the tool. Rather an irrational visual than a curious one.

That rods have always been controversial tools is undoubted. To realize this, just look at any catalogue, even those that boast antique origins, legendary traditions – in other words the “official fly fishing”. Paging through these authentic bibles, you find a philosophy of some that is to create rods that fish remarkably well. Why not! Others declare their rods as reactive, powerful and mellow. And little matters evidently if between mellowness and reactivity there is an abyss. Others define their rods as powerful, very fast, accurate and delicate – and if this is not magic...

Others boast that their rods load easily to get delicate presentations at short distances but also capable to cast with millimetric precision at great distances more than 30 meters. Really? And rods and then more rods. Infinite rods. Of all types, all lengths that cast different weights. For short casts, long casts for various kinds of waters, the most fantastic maneuvers and so on. Rods that give exceptional results however they are used. Science at its highest? No, the maximum of witchery I think.



*In TLT the speed of the line derives mainly from the dynamic of the cast and only in a minor way from the rod.*

There are three controversial aspects that in a different way govern a rod:

1. distance, the long cast
2. the length of the rod
3. its power, the weight it can cast

Let's examine one at a time starting from distance. A controversial and misleading aspect. When we generically speak about distance, the risk is to place this goal among those indefinite issues destined to the most varied interpretations. Vice versa if we consider it in its true dimension which is fishing, then to answer this question, it suffices to determine which is the rule and what you mean by length. An average fishing cast (the rule) is rather modest – 16 meters or little more, while the exception will use this distance as a starting point to cast further.

So for what arcane motive should a rod not adapt and even be in symbiosis with this measurement? Why should it not be designed to give its best within this distance if this is true? Instead it is curious that rods are designed for longer casts.

Whatever you may think, a rod must give its best performance within this distance. On the contrary I find it surprising and counterproductive. A rod is studied to obtain the maximum distance and by force of things is lacking at shorter distances – just where its best performance would be necessary. It does the first thing well and is lacking in the second. On top of it all distance is not a specific fishing objective as is precision, presentation etc. but it is a generic objective. And when an objective is generic it is abstract, the rods is also abstract. Any non specific outlook is approximate.

Another controversial aspect of the length of the rod. A part from particular cases, and excluding lock fishing etc, what does a long rod serve for? Between a 7'6" and a 9', the length of most rods, there is no significant difference, no relevant performance to justify its use. For sure it does not guarantee a better cast. What does this quality have anything to do with the length ! Finally, this length does not even guarantee a greater distance (a controversial quality) unless it is used with a heavier line.



*The casting dynamics at the same time flexibility of interpretation, and extreme rigor in respecting the rules on which each part lies.*

TLT has a completely opposite visual to most of the current “all round” rods or to the “series” that are so common in the US. Any non specific visual is approximative

I will end by saying that in my day, a good fisherman was one that had a lot of knowledge and few objects. And the greater his knowledge, the less objects he owned. Today it is the opposite to the point that the true dimension of the rod should not be sought on the rivers but in the fisherman's mind. The more he totters internally, the more he need to base his rickety frame on shiny trinkets. With the last model, a great number of tools – surrogates of ability.

*Q: It is quite evident that you do not have much sympathy for rods that flex in the mid section. I can deduce that your rod behaves differently. More tippy. Is that so?*

For TLT the main function of the rod, the only one in fact, is to cast. Anything extra (the so called pleasantness in use) without going against its finality (efficiency) is an optional. Anything that subtracts (slowness, conditioning etc) are handicaps. The TLT rod was designed to suit the cast, just like the bodywork of a racing car is by the wind. An instrument, therefore that was conceived to answer certain requirements of fishing and it is at the fisherman's service. Casting, rod and fishing are one. The cannot be considered alone.

Other than what has been said, the most evident difference that separates a traditional rod from a TtLT rod is that the former in order to do its job must be relatively flexible while the latter to do the same thing must be rigid – it must have a fixed velocity that among other things derives from the material and its structure. In order to take advantage of different velocities, we must revert to instruments that are structurally different. Vice versa the TLT rod, for the fact that it is rigid does not have a built in velocity and neither a fixed one. Its velocity derives from the manner it is maneuvered and therefore it is variable. That is why contrarily to what you may think, light lines are cast with more efficiency with stiff rods rather than with flexible ones. And finally the lighter the line, the less you feel it loading (weight that flexes the rod). But the faster this line moves, the more you feel its weight even if it is light. The role carried on in the past by the weight is now substituted by “tension” which is a consequence of velocity which in turn is in close relationship with the no-stop: the TLT no-stop.



The in-congruency of traditional techniques is that they try to resolve fishing problems with the instruments. At the same time these instruments are not designed for these requirements. TLT uses the dynamics of casting the role that traditional techniques have delegated to the instruments – thus reducing this to a mere medium. In practice an instrument that is the docile executor of our will – therefore neutral. When an instrument interferes with our actions, it conditions the result to a certain extent and the user is forced to compensate with his personal ability. And ability, contrarily to the dynamic where cause and effect are interdependent is not an absolute fact.

*Q: If the leader and tip are fundamental elements to fight drag and for presentation of the fly, the tip of the rod is equally indispensable so that the first two can execute their respective roles.*

Maurizio, you have supposed well. It is so. For the only finalities that have been discussed, a rod can be divided into two parts: the body and the tip. The body is the rudimentary part of the instrument. It can be good to achieve distance or at most to achieve it better or more easily.

A TLT instrument in the contrary works with the tip. It is here that all the maneuvers originate and that the other cannot do: movement of the line that do not derive from a more or less uniform pressure of the hand on the grip (with all due respect the equivalent to using a club) but rather from the pressure of the thumb on the section of the tip that we wish to use from time to time.

It is this different pressure of the thumb as it acts on the tip of the rod instead of small sections of the tip, especially on its sensitive extremity, that gives you the beauty of the gesture and the result. From this range of actions, the thousands of ways to place your tippet in the water that I can say that the universe of presentations comes from.



*It is the tip that determines those deadly bolts of lightning and the most delicate presentations.*

The more things are important, the more they are overlooked. Sometimes they are like bright stars in the sky and in others like fireflies that disappear into the night. The more you try to make them concrete, the more they tend to vanish. Just like trying to hold a handful of water: only a few drops remain.

Our thumb is the most important lever we own. This finger can be like a mallet or like a feather. The traditional techniques tend to modulate the pressure of the thumb. It is used in a constant way – monotonously. At most according to the distance of the cast, it will mean more force. The longer the cast, the more this force is applied. This is almost a brutality. For sure very rough. TLT uses no force and without any sophistication. Force only knows force. Vice versa the sophistication has the same importance that chiaroscuro has in drawing.

The traditional techniques carry out the thrust more or less in the same place and unless the distance does not change even with the same intensity or almost. Vice versa in TLT this maneuver varies greatly because when faced with so many different dynamics and variables according to which part of the rod tip you are actioning, by force there will be consequential movements. The world of TLT is the thrusting moment. A world that is unknown or almost in other techniques. It is what this technique gets its magnification, its great versatility and its elastic versatility. It is the triumph of technique, of the technical rigor, of efficiency, elegance and beauty of the movement. It is without doubt that a beautiful thing works better than an ugly one.

In TLT the thrust moment has no limits, for its energy that spaces from the smallest to the largest, for its velocity – which is also characterized both by fast and slower lines. No limits even with regards to the gestures from the tighter ones to the more plastic ones.

Among these extremes, there are many movements that only a refined technique like TLT can express. The vigor of certain thrusting moments are equivalent to a stab but never as brutal as that action. In other cases, the hand is lighter than when you stroke a child or a light gust of wind. In this gesture there is the same rigor, elegance and geometry and deadly efficiency that you find in martial arts. From a strictly technical point of view, the study of the thrusting moment, a world of many movements, is equivalent to studying TLT in its totality.



*The first requisite of an efficient instrument is that it is "neutral". Just like the steering wheel in a race car. Why? It is unthinkable that for every movement the driver makes on the wheel, you do not have a corresponding and consequent movement at the wheels. It is rigorously dependent. For neutral instrument we mean any instrument that does not hinder our will. More or less the opposite happens in traditional casting that force you to adapt to the rod flexing. Why is fly fishing an exception? For which remote reason is it so different in such a clamorous manner to a rule that in any other sector would be considered as basic?*

*When an instrument is not neutral, it does not permit movements like those in the Photo, for example.*

*Q: Now let's speak more about fishing. I seem to understand that there is a close relationship between your casting technique and fishing.*

Fishing is not a limited and definite world but rather a world in continuous mutation. There is a continuous mutation that revolutionizes everything – environment and fish. Everything is apparently old and similar and at the same time everything is different and new. Consequently there are no absolute truths but only temporary ones. Because every moment in time has its truths. You never stop learning but not because any thing cannot be learned completely but because this mutation creates new problems. So the only truth that exists in fishing is "mutation of the truth with time". That is why the game is endless.

The principle of TLT find its place in its genesis: it was born from the water in function of fishing. Everything begins from the conformation of the environment the mother of all things. It is the beginning of a chain in which the last link is represented by the fish that lives in it. In fact the conformation of the environment determines the type, the amount of flow in the river the amount of food, the regularity and the forms. The relationship between the environmental conformation where the river flows and its character, is the key to decipher every river system, the fish that live in it and consequently our behaviour. To the point that by observing a certain place you can figure out the other. This is the reality we need to confront.

Consequently:

1. the conformation models the characteristics of a river system
2. these peculiarities determine the conformation of the pools, the quantity and regularity with which food is generated etc.
3. the sum of these specificities, mold (even psychologically) the behaviour of the fish
4. these characteristics are the basic knowledge that determine the behaviour of the fisherman in his approach to a certain environment (technical profile) and the fish (his knowledge). This is the beginning of the circle, the center point of the circle, the place in which our actions are born (casting, presentation etc) and also the thrusting moment – the origin of all the movements of our line.

This is true for everyone, independently from the rod used – Bamboo included. Also because these rods are not designed to cast heavy nymphs or the current plastic abominations that are hypocritically called flies and they are not.

There is little to say about fishing. You are right when you say that there is a close relationship between TLT and my vision of fishing. In fact as a fisherman I evolved step by step with my technique.

The one is connected to the other. You can say that after the many modifications to my technique my casting which at first was stiff was molded on the waters in which I was forced to fish. So, if before problems that seemed without solution (drag especially in faster waters), a price to pay, were solved easily. Trout that lay in positions that resembled impregnable fortresses like deep down behind bushes, capitulated with surprising ease. I had finally become conscious of the importance of a “dynamic that was finalized to the requirements of fishing” which TLT exactly is. Even those casts that are used in the different situations were born instinctively. Naturally. Just like water comes out of the ground. As I started along this path, my casting technique become more efficient.

In short I had solved most of the problems that conditioned my fishing. This is how I discovered a new world. A world that forced me to put my previous behaviour into discussion and that obliged me to look at the same problems under a different light. For this reason, today I catch a lot more than in the past and my casting is a lot better. Isn't that fishing?



*It is not blasphemy to declare that a fishing outing is not the desperate search for some trout to add to others? And bigger ones too? That a river is not a battle ground to travel on mercilessly? That a fly is not a bullet to be shot to the surface in a somber mood, fierce look, greedy heart? With respect to 30 years ago, there is a lot more technical knowledge and even better skill. But what does this serve for if they are not both held up by ethics?*



*We are Italian, extremes by definition.*

**Q: You always mention casting and presentation but never about the importance of the fly. Do you consider them less important? Every fisherman has a considerable number of flies in his vest.**

This is the most difficult question to answer synthetically because it involves various aspects of the system. In my book *Magia sull'Acqua*, for example, the matter occupies various pages.

I presume that this question is in relation to my previous answer, where I declare that there are no limits to the range of presentations. Unfortunately they are written on water and they are not easy to see if our eyes and minds are occupied on the subtle difference in colour between two flies placed on a wise like for most fishermen. I added that if in our fly boxes we had a few models less and our cast some other presentations, we would have better results.

This said does not imply that I neglect the flies. I just meant that most fishermen attribute too much importance to them - in my opinion. Perhaps even disproportionate. For these a catch lies exclusively in these few feathers. One thing is the importance of the fly, another is its proliferation.

The first thing is substantially simple. The other is a tangle worse than a tangled leader.

Taking for granted that a fisherman is able to choose the right fly, this dilemma rides a tight line between rationality and illogicality. The first one (experience) subtracts; the other (the contrary) increases it. Personal insecurity that can include experience can even multiply it. The number of flies is subjective and has nothing to do with this question.

There is another worrying aspect. For too many fishermen, flyfishing has become a totem: the fly fishing totem - a dribbling Moloch. It devours everything. It has destroyed casting (anyway I still catch fish). It has swept away the quality of the presentation of the fly (anyway only the fly counts). In a few words it has trivialized and even impoverished the system. Without solving any problems. This said we continue to produce "new" models one after the other. More than the stars in the heavens. An incredible mush-mash. I do not know of any sector in which too often, the "nothing" is filled with such meticulous care. Despite this the problem remains. The mystery now reigns supreme. Breath a sigh of relief, we can still make many new splendid unique patterns.

**Q: Even though your casting technique requires a very fast rod, characteristic that are not so common in bamboo (even though there are tapers that we can define "fast", like the famous IRP in two pieces that you developed in collaboration with IBRA), you have always shown great liking to our association and you are often at our gatherings like this year in Sanssepulcro. What really associates Roberto Pragliola with IBRA?**

There is a close relationship between casting and the flexibility of the rod, between the ability in casting and speed of the rod. TO the point that the more the average level in casting ability evolves, the more you will consider flexible what before you considered stiff. The day in which a certain ability will be common, not only will the evaluations vary with regards to the two terms, functionality will leave space and the two terms of confrontation will disappear. A ruling that only has one measure and evaluates velocity for its objective comparison. Just like what has happened to English rods and then the French ones and so forth.

The IBRA/Pragliola rod when used with a traditional technique, with difficulty can be defined as a fast rod, at least according to my parameters. On the contrary if it is used with the TLT method, the term can be evaluated again. The maneuver to make it so is an old one and I've called it "stretching the rod": a movement that is closely related to the thrusting moment and to the differences that this gesture gives when you vary the entity (force expressed in a short space) and the point (with respect to the whole rod length and in particular the tip) in which it is carried out. Funnily also this depends on the thumb that acts on the tip.

To understand this better, let's take the face of a clock. When you activate the thrust movement in traditional cast and the rod held almost vertically, the rod flexes more or less according to its characteristics. In any case this position contributes to act on the middle of the rods – this is the origin of many problems. Velocity being the first one. ma.

Vice versa if after having started the acceleration you start a rotation of the wrist so the the tip passes ahead and so the instrument advances very inclined forwards and at the same time you carry out the thrusting movement at a later stage (around 2-3 o' clock – it depends; additionally by pushing the the tip of the rod forwards (almost linearly), this position prevents the involvement of most of the body of the rod which is its "softer " part which is the origin of many issues.



*This rotation of the wrist is the most important one; destined to make the tip of the rods traveled inclined forwards.*

*General indication of the thrusting movement to "stretch" the rod with a graphite rod.*

*The fingers of the holding hand open and the thumb contributes its part to maintain tension: a remarkable contribution to favour the maneuver. The movement only involves the tip.*



Technically is a great advantage. It is like using the rods in "sections". Rather like using different rods and not only one. The possibility of using in a more complete and diverse way of taking advantage of the rod; it allows otherwise impossible performances that involve the cast, the presentation of the fly.

A rod is not a rudimentary instrument that emits only one sound (parallel trajectory). A one string instrument that buries the fantasy of even the most excellent talent a deep cloud of mediocrity. A rod is an orchestra. It can emit a thousand sounds, a thousand tonalities, a myriad of subtle nuances like in the most beautiful harmonies. Unfortunately this is the sad destiny of those who use an excess of weight and that cast in parallel lines and that perform always and only this movement.

In the old days when bamboo was king, the makers were capable of acts of love and knew how to make rods with their hearts. It was always disconcerting by the gap between the attention that was applied in making the rod and the way it was then used. Is is the same gap that you find between this great passion, this splendid ability and the monotonous and repetitive, trivial way that these rods were used. It was the worst insult that you could send these men.

L'IBRA is an oasis, fortunately and unfortunately at the same time. Fly fishing has had sublime actors, poets, beautiful. These are the type of people that have made IBRA great and that today we are destroying and we have no right to do so. Graphite rods may even be cold, heartless but they are capable of a deadly efficiency. Unfortunately most of today's fishermen do know neither the one nor the other. The modern individuals are squalid, mediocre. Incapable to carry out sublime actions. These characters, after a catch have sacrificed everything to the most modern, ramshackle barbarian of the gods. There is no space for poetry, for a beautiful technical action from which you fulfilled and that cannot be measured by the size of the fish or the number of fish caught; the only way that is used to evaluate fish today.

Above all there is no space for beauty so that all is left is catching. Big, always bigger. Shown off to the four winds. Externalization instead of interiority. And finally the rush, the disease of this century which is elevated to the highest alters. Incensed with the most venomous and garish poisons. Praised with the most deafening clamors. Vulgar. And haste, its close relative. This haste that closes minds and hearts. That has devoured this world with the fury of those that hate beauty. Nothing is done for the pleasure or the pride to do something beautiful per se. This is what I breath in IBRA and I cannot find any other association where I can find this. That is why I am always happy to attend your gathers.



*Alberto Poratelli current IBRA President with Roberto Pragliola signing his IRP7232*

To cap it all, I am pleased to see that the best bamboo rods that I have seen at your gatherings are better than the industrial ones built in my day. Even of the most prestigious names.

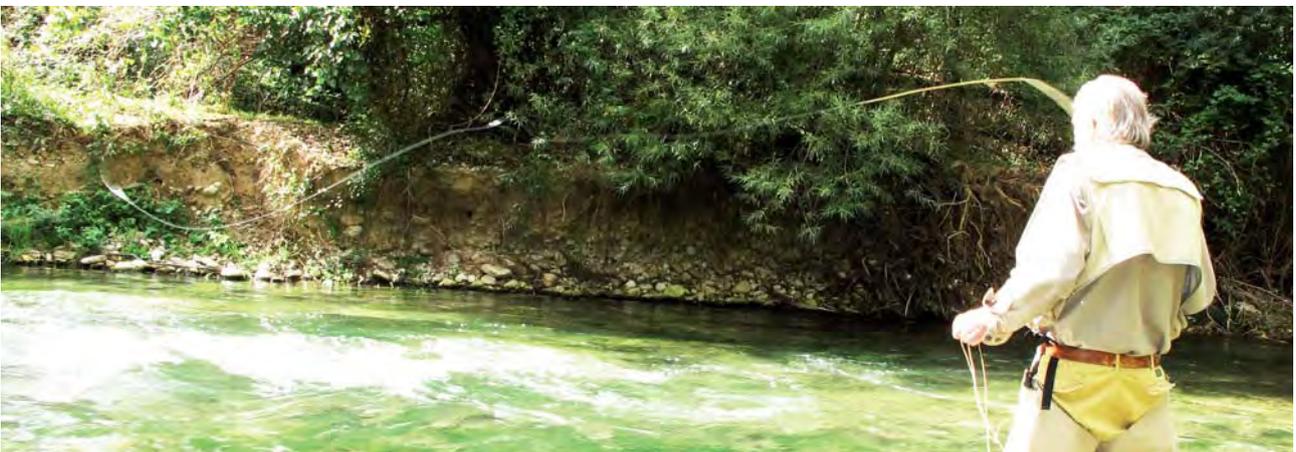
We all know that the limits of bamboo are speed and length. While the former is considered essential, the latter (the length) and its most acclaimed advantages are only marketing strategies with respect to trout and grayling. I think we can correct the first issue at least to a certain length. I mean that there is space to make faster rods than the IBRA / Pragliola. To me this seems a road that is worth traveling on. In IBRA I know capable people. All you need is the will.

And now a series of photos; the barriers between what is in the reach of bamboo and what unfortunately is not.



*These technical action is impossible without a very fast rod and of a specific TLT graphite rod.*

*Impossible for bamboo.*



*Completely turning over a leader that is so long, which is invisible for its entire length because of such a short line is possible with bamboo. In this case velocity is not necessary – in fact it is counterproductive. The action consists in a great rotation of the rod (better if the maneuver with the rod held perpendicularly) of the tip until the thrust movement paying attention to give a low progressive velocity. Is the leader too long? Probably. All depends on how you conceive fishing. Normally TLT uses tapered leaders that are about twice as long as the rod.*

The length of the leader is subjective. A leader that may be considered too long for some can be easily turned over by others. So what do you do? A rule exists and it is: use a leader that is just too long for you to turn over completely. This criterion is different from person to person but everyone has his own length. The same reasoning is valid for the tippet.



*This maneuver ( the TLT tangent to the water cast), corresponds to a line that travels in the air very close to the water surface. This cast is obviously based on high velocity. It serves to place your fly under the vegetation. This maneuver is impossible not only for bamboo but also for most rods used in the usual techniques.*



*When the trajectory is rather high above the surface like in this case , the same tangent cast can be executed at low velocity. Thus even with a bamboo rod. In fact this cast was born with bamboo rods.*



*The fly is placed on the water with the leader curved backwards with respect to the fly. : This presentation is difficult but possible with bamboo.*

*In the circle the fly.*



*Also this maneuver is carried out with relative velocity. Possible with bamboo.*



*This is also possible with bamboo.*



*The same for this cast.*



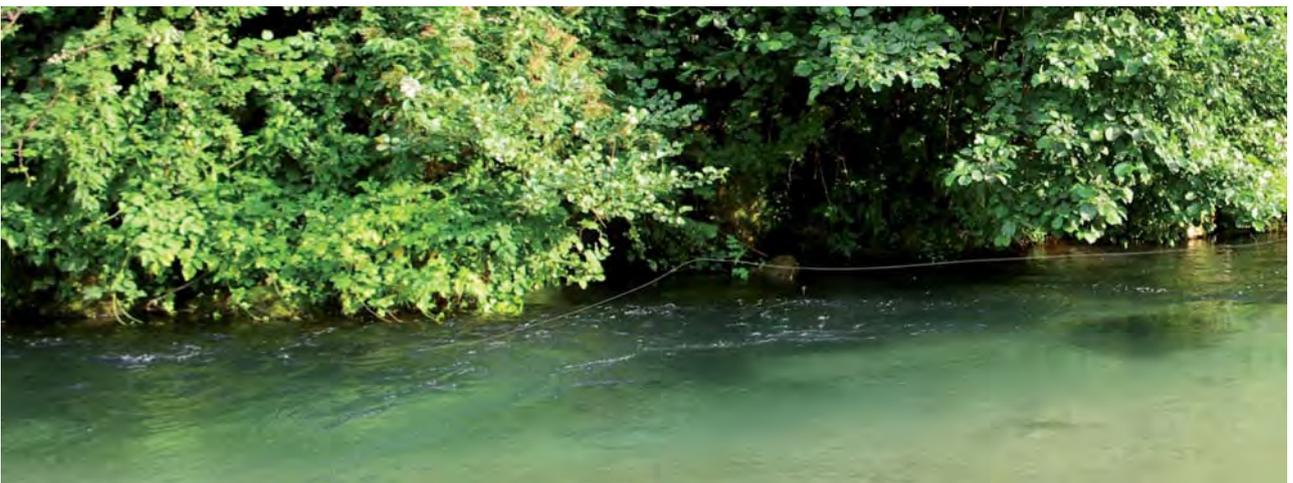
*This maneuver (one of the many versions of the superimposed TLT casts) is an exclusivity of high velocity. It serves to place you fly under the vegetation even for a short drift: a stimulus for the fish that rejects other presentations. The trajectory is executed in slight angulation. As soon as the finest part of the leader touches the water, you immediately stop. At the same time the leader which is still all in the air, curved backwards but that still has its initial inertial force, that little that makes it slide forwards and straight on the surface for a brief tract. Greater velocity makes the fly slide for longer tracts and with greater velocity.*



*One of the many typical presentations of this technique: the fly on one side and the tippet on the other. The line thanks to a long leader is still far away from the landing place when it will be the first to land. Silence is assured which is fundamental for flat waters. If the fly reached the fish with any disturbance, there are more probabilities to be accepted even if it is not the right fly. This can be done with bamboo.*



*Parallel trajectory but the line and leader are bent towards the water almost at right angles.*



*Detail of the previous photos. The tip of the line and the leader bent towards the water at a right angle.*



*Gabriele Gori, IBRA's first President at the presentation of the rod "IBRA - Roberto Pragliola" occurred in Arezzo (Tuscany)*

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Most of the photos (and texts) are extracts form my book "Il Lancio Totale".

All the casts were carried out with Loomis TLT rods. The lines are #3 double taper and the leader approximately twice the length of the rod.

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