

П. ДЕ МАТТЕИС
Paolo DE MATTEIS

**TEMPI DI MEZZO В ЭПОХУ ПРОСВЕЩЕНИЯ:
ДИНАМИЗАЦИЯ В АРИИ КОНЦА XVIII ВЕКА**

**TEMPI DI MEZZO IN THE AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT:
DYNAMIZATION IN THE LATE EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ARIA**

Аннотация. Ария в опере seria XVIII века обычно считается статичной с театральной точки зрения, тогда как многочастная ария XIX столетия явно динамична и включает в себя сценическое действие. Это кардинальное изменение произошло в последней четверти XVIII века: действительно, происходит постепенный переход от единой концепции аффекта, воплощенной в замкнутой структуре da capo, к идее развивающегося характера, которому соответствует новая концепция. «векторная», линейная форма, состоящая из двух разных частей: двухтемповое рондò. Сейчас точно установлено, что solita forma — пространенная форма итальянской оперы XIX века — произошла от медленного и быстрого двухтемпового рондò (Budden 1973, Beghelli 2000, Chegai 2003). Однако ария XIX века при этом включает кинетическую среднюю часть — так называемое *tempo di mezzo* — которая обеспечивает музыкальный и драматургический переход от медленного к быстрому движению. Тем не менее, процесс, с помощью которого развивалась такая динамическая часть в арии конца XVIII века, еще не выяснен. С этой целью в ходе исследования было изучено около 450 либретто и более 250 рукописных партитур, датированных последними тремя десятилетиями XVIII века. Фактически, в 1780-х годах ария «медленно-быстро» превратилась во вместилище для всех видов динамизации: смены аффектов, перелома, *pertichini*, закульисных звуков. Однако, как я объясню в докладе, ранние *tempi di mezzo* не были встроены в рондò, а скорее в многочастные арии, расположенные в основных поворотных точках оперы. Будут продемонстрированы примеры, относящиеся к последнему десятилетию века и взятые из опер малоизвестных, но новаторских настроенных итальянских композиторов (преимущественно венецианского региона): В этих ариях есть автономные развивающиеся части, которые уже содержат вид драматизации, присущий итальянской романтической опере XIX века.

Ключевые слова: ария, оперные формы, итальянская опера seria конца XVIII века, итальянская романтическая опера XIX века, *solita forma*, ария-*rondò*, *tempo di mezzo*

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Abstract. 18th century seria aria is generally considered static from a theatrical point of view, whereas 19th century multisectional aria is overtly dynamic, incorporating much of the stage action. This pivotal change occurred in the last quarter of the 18th century: indeed, there is a gradual shift from the unitary concept of affect — embodied in the circular structure of *da capo* aria — to the idea of a character in motion, matched by a new ‘vectorial,’ linear form consisting of two different sections: the two-tempo *rondò*. It is now well established that the *solita forma* — the pervasive form of 19th century Italian opera — evolved from the slow-fast two-tempo *rondò* [Budden 1973, Beghelli 2000, Chegai 2003]. However, 19th century aria includes a kinetic mid-section — the so-called ‘*tempo di mezzo*’ — which provides a musical and dramaturgical transition from slow to fast movement; but still, the process by which such a dynamic section developed within the late 18th century aria has not yet been clarified. For this purpose, nearly 450 librettos and more than 250 manuscript scores dating from the last three decades of 18th century have been examined during this research. In fact, in the 1780s, slow-fast aria turned into a container for all sorts of dynamizations: byplays, changes of mind, resolutions, ‘*pertichini*,’ off-stage sounds; however, as I will explain in this paper, early ‘*tempi di mezzo*’ were not embedded within the *rondò*, but rather in multisectional arias located in the main turning points of the opera. After a brief introduction about the cultural and aesthetic background of this major shift and the various types of dynamizations found within *rondò*, I will show examples — dating back to the last decade of the century — taken from operas by little-known but pioneering Italian composers, especially from Venetian area: these arias feature complex self-contained kinetic sections which already contain the kind of dramatization that lies at the heart of 19th century Italian Romantic opera.

Keywords: aria, opera formes, Italian opera seria in the late 18th century, Italian romantic opera of 19th century, *solita forma*, *aria-rondò*, *tempo di mezzo*

Aria of 18th century opera seria is generally regarded to be static from a theatrical point of view, whereas 19th century multisectional aria is overtly dynamic, since it incorporates much of the stage action. This gradual transitional process occurred in the last quarter of 18th century.

The two-tempo *rondò* played a key role in this gradual shift.¹ Although it is possible to find certain micro-dynamizations in some ternary forms, all of the arias written before the establishing of two-tempo *rondò* have a clear *circular* nature, which means that after the dramatic shift, there is always a return to the starting position. The absolute innovation of two-tempo *rondò* lies in his *vectorial* nature because, after the second section, the return to the initial position is avoided; therefore, the *rondò* allows, for the first time, a *potential* dynamization set into a linear musical form, which involves the transformation of the affect during the number itself.

¹ The bibliography on the two-tempo *rondò* is rather extensive. It will suffice here to mention the works by Daniel Heartz [9, pp. 275–293; 10, pp. 298–317], Helga Lühning [12, S. 219–246], John A. Rice [15, pp. 185–209; 16, pp. 101–138].

It is not simple to outline the reasons for such shift; certainly, they are to be found in a complex patchwork of intertwined factors including:

- the influence of the philosophy of the Enlightenment, especially of Diderot's theories about theatrical verisimilitude;
- a gradual shift from the unitary concept of affect to the idea of a character in motion, matched by the slow rise of a new bourgeois middle class;²
- a renewed interest in performative issues, epitomized by the famous actor David Garrick;
- the increased importance of sensiblerie and the growing desire for 'simplicity and truth' (as advocated by Gluck);
- the influence of opera buffa and its dramatic and musical language;
- the changed public taste;³
- and finally, a new vision of time (Neuzeit) in the late eighteenth-century, due to a shift from an enveloping, static and circular time to a new, dynamic and linear time.⁴

The combination of all of these elements may have contributed to the development of a pathetic two-part aria, featuring a musical, affective and agogic escalation, similar to the major dynamizations of the next century.

It is now well established that the *solita forma* – the pervasive form of 19th century Italian opera — evolved from the slow-fast two-tempo *rondò*.⁵ However, among the many differences between the *rondò* and the 19th century aria is the presence of the so-called *tempo di mezzo*, namely a kinetic mid-section serving as a musical and dramaturgical transition from slow to fast movement.

In the 1780's the two-tempo *rondò* turned into a container for all sorts of dynamizations: byplays (especially tearful byplays of the beloved woman, with standard lines such as «*Ma tu piangi*»), resolutions (for instance a sudden decision to leave or die: «*Ah si mora*», or «*Ma convien ch'io vada a morte*»), but also changes of mind, off-stage sounds and, especially, *pertichini*.

Nonetheless, these dynamizations hardly ever join together as a self-contained kinetic movement, comparable to 19th century *tempo di mezzo*. Starting from the last decade of 18th century, some arias began to incorporate several dynamic elements which together contributed to a more complex dynamization, giving rise to "kinetic micro-sections" that justify the character's change of mood, as well as the passage

² See Carl Dahlhaus, *Ethos und Pathos in Glucks Iphigenie auf Tauris* [7, pp. 289–300] and *Drammaturgia dell'opera italiana* [6, pp. 94–95].

³ See Franco Piperno, *Opera Production to 1780* [14, pp. 1–79, 58–59]; Gerardo Guccini, *Esploratori e «indigeni» nei teatri del '700* [8, pp. 89–106: 97].

⁴ See Reinhart Koselleck, *The Eighteenth Century as the Beginning of Modernity* [11, pp. 154–169], Karol Berger, *Bach's Cycle, Mozart's Arrow* [2, pp. 131–176], Sebastian Conrad, *A Cultural History of Global Transformation* [5, pp. 413–662: 527–581].

⁵ On this issue, see Marco Beghelli, *Alle origini della cabaletta* [1, pp. 593–630], Andrea Chegai, *La cabaletta dei castrati* [3, pp. 221–268], Johanne Paterson, *From Rondò Aria to Cantabile-Cabaletta* [13].

from slow movement to *stretta*. However, these ‘early *tempi di mezzo*’ were not embedded within the *rondò*, but rather in multisectional arias located in the main turning points of the opera, resulting in complex self-contained kinetic movements.

Such dynamic sections are frequently set in a well-defined dramatic framework, often ritualistic in nature, or in more ordinary situations where the stage action is interrupted by a confrontational dialogue. What distinguishes these 18th century *tempi di mezzo* from previous dramatizations is the input of new information for the lead singer, conveyed in specific stage situations which differ according to the way in which information is sent and received:

- *announcement*: the message is explicitly sent in verbal form; it may involve a joyful or tragic occurrence, the arrival of someone, or the main character’s death or sentence;
- *unveiling*: the character learns the information through the senses, seeing with his own eyes an occurrence revealing a new reality: it may concern a culprit’s identity, or a secret or consist in a recovery of someone thought to be lost.

Both announcements and unveilings may take place in ritual situations such as oaths, prayers or invocations;

- The input of new information may also come from the singer himself: the kinetic section may have as its core a *resolution* that frequently affects the entire opera.
- Finally, a simple situation may include a mere *interruption* of the dramaturgical and musical stream, due for example to an argument.

Poets and composers created these *tempi di mezzo* through a set of *dynamic units*: small modular blocks that could be selected and combined in different ways to compose the kinetic section:

- *sound signal*, usually a march, a chorus or another off-stage sound;
- *entrance* of the chorus or one or more characters, causing an interruption in the musical-dramatic stream;
- *announcement* by the chorus or by one or more *pertichini*: it is usually the key element of the *tempo di mezzo*;
- *dialogue* with the chorus or with one or several characters: it can be a neutral one or a quarrel;
- *departure* of another character, thus causing an escalation of the affect for the main singer;
- *interruption* of an action by the lead singer (attempted departure, interrupted oath), because of the chorus, other characters or stage events;
- *revealing* of hidden truths and interpersonal relationships; it may be an unveiling or a recognition;
- *urging* that drives the character to act or to leave; it can be a persuasion, an order or a threat;

• finally, a *gestural action* involving well-defined gestures or a ‘*scenographic*’ event, that is the alteration of the stage space, be it concretely achieved — through stage and lighting design — or simulated by the actors.

Once the dynamic scene has come to an end, the *tempo di mezzo* often concludes with a brief section of emotional *exasperation* or *stabilization* that, with a climax or an adjustment, sums up the dynamic part, preparing, dramaturgically and musically, the outburst of the *stretta*.

I would like to offer here three examples of multisectional dynamic arias placed within some of the stage situations just described.

The first two are oath scenes which create solemn ritualized scenes.

Amleto by Giuseppe Maria Foppa and Gaetano Andreozzi (Padua 1792) contains a complex dynamization albeit embedded in a single movement along with the *stretta*,⁶ the piece represents the main turning point of the entire opera. In a vast vault («*sotterraneo vastissimo*») where the urn of the king is preserved, Amleto brought together the nobles of the realm so that each one could swear to their innocence on the king’s ashes.

The aria begins as a prayer with a *Larghetto* in E major and then there is a quicker movement, *Andantino* which, however, does not imply a change in the affect:⁷ rather, the music expresses Amleto’s trustful resignation. The bassoons introduce a brief transition in which Amleto asks his mother and Claudio to go to take the oath. The weak cadence that supports Amleto’s words marks the beginning of the dynamic section which bursts out with sixteenth notes that lead to the II degree, on which Claudio and Geltrude express their agitation («*Che farò? / Morir mi sento*», ‘What will I do? / I feel like I’m dying’); Amleto presses them and they get close to the urn, supported by a pedal point on the tonic and an ascending sixteenth notes figure played by the violins; following the word «*Giuro*» (‘I swear’) there is a fermata on a half rest.

At this point the stage gets dark (stage direction: «*s’oscura la scena; ed improvvisamente si vede infuocata l’urna*», ‘suddenly the urn catches fire’); the scenographic event is highlighted by a tonal change from E major to C major;⁸ a lively figure played by the first violins represents the characters’ agitation, while fast modulating passages realize the general confusion.

Therefore, the scenographic event highlighted by the music serves as an unveiling of the culprit’s true identity in the eyes of Amleto: his couplet («*Ciel che miro! Ah tutto intendo...! / Or conosco i traditor*» ‘What’s this I see! I understand

⁶ *Amleto*, Foppa-Andreozzi, Padova 1792: Conzatti, I-Bc, Lo.00156. Gaetano Andreozzi, *Amleto*. Partitura dell’opera in facsimile. Edizione del libretto, edited by Marcello Conati, Milano, Ricordi, 1984 («*Drammaturgia musicale veneta*», Istituto Italiano Antonio Vivaldi della Fondazione Giorgio Cini, Venezia — Dipartimento di Storia e Critica delle Arti dell’Università di Venezia, n. 26). For discussion of the opera, see the introductory essay by Marcello Contanti, *Un “Sackspear” per “Jommellino”* [4, pp. VIII–XLVIII].

⁷ There is no tempo change in the score but it is conceivable that the change in the vocal and orchestral writing demands some agogic intensification (*Andantino* or *Allegro moderato*) [Ibid., p. XL].

⁸ «*Immediatamente dopo il loro giuramento è come si aprisse una sorta di baratro tonale*» [Ibid.].

everything / Now I know the traitors’) has the function of stabilization of the changed situation as well as transition from the parallel key (E minor) to the tonic; thereafter a ‘*stretto*’ with chorus seamlessly begins, serving as final affective expression.

<p>Scene VII <i>Sotterraneo vastissimo, ove stanno situate sopra alcuni piedistalli le urne degli estinti re della Danimarca, e quella del padre d'Amleto in qualche eminenza</i></p>			
LARGHETTO 6/8			
<p>AMLETO Deh ti placa, e in tal momento rendi o padre, a me la calma; ah se incerta ho ancor quest'alma non poss'io sperar mercè.</p>	Prayer	E E minor	A ₁
[ANDANTINO] 4/4			
<p>La mia gioia, il mio contento or dipende sol da te.</p>		E	A ₂
<p>Madre... Claudio... all'urna andate, e innocenza là giurate.</p>	Order	E	t
ALLEGRO 4/4			
<p>CLAUDIO (Che farò...?) GELTRUDE (Morir mi sento...) AMLETO Si vacilla...? CLAUDIO Pronto sono. GELTRUDE Pronta sono. <i>(vanno all'urna)</i> A 2 Giuro...</p>	<p><i>Pertichini</i>, dialogue, movement, interruption (oath)</p>	F# → B → E	B
<p><i>S'oscura la scena; poi si dilegua l'oscurità ed improvvisamente si vede infuocata l'urna</i> CORO Oh Dio! qual nero orror! AMLETO Ciel che miro! ah tutto intendo...! Or conosco i traditor.</p>	<p>Scenographic event = unveiling stabilization</p>	<p>C → A minor → G → B E minor → B</p>	
<p>Ah d'un figlio disperato tremi ognuno al fiero sdegno: morte omai sul braccio armato a terror del reo mi sta. CORO La sua voce è quasi fulmine, che si scaglia a' danni miei! Tanta smania avversi dei l'alma mia soffrir non sa. <i>Tutti in gran disordine partono, chi da una parte chi dall'altra</i></p>	<i>Stretto</i>	E	C

It is clear that there is a sharp distinction between the unveiling and the ‘*stretto*’: therefore, despite being incorporated in the final movement, the B section can actually be defined as a kinetic mid-section, placed between two different stage situations, that modifies the course of the entire opera and not just the aria.

Merope by Mattia Botturini and Sebastiano Nasolini (Venice 1796) presents a similar stage action: an interrupted oath which reveals the culprit’s true identity, in the act of proclaiming the perjury on the king’s tomb.

Polifonte’s aria, however, «*Giuro che il re difesi*»⁹ (‘I swear I defended the king’), features three factors that distinguish it from Andreozzi’s aria:

- Nasolini’s aria is for the tenor, the antagonist;
- the oath is interrupted due to the apparition of the king’s ghost;
- the entire dynamic section is enclosed in a single self-contained middle movement.

In the first movement (*Largo* in C major), the tyrant swears on king Cresfonte’s tomb that he has always defended the sovereign. The movement is only 16 bars long and concludes in the dominant with a fermata. The same tonal gap of a major third found in *Amleto*, together with a new *Andante con moto*, emphasizes what is taking place on the stage: «*odesi fremer l’ombra di Cresfonte*» (‘the sound of Cresfonte’s trembling ghost is heard’).

At this very moment, therefore, the king appears; in the manuscript copy I examined, all the six gestural stage directions concerning the action between the ghost and Polifonte are written: every gesture was carefully set to music by the composer: the threats, the approach, the accusations of the king’s ghost are highlighted by rhythmic modules built upon semitone intervals, fast descending figures played by the first violins and dense modulating passages.

A brief terrified sentence of stabilization follows, and thereafter the ghost disappears. The final ‘*stretto*’ includes a chorus and a ‘theme’ exposed twice by Polifonte.

Scene XII			
<i>Veduta delle tombe dei re di Messene in tempo di notte con varie faci qua e là sparse che illuminano il recinto</i>			
LARGO 4/4			
POLIFONTE Giuro che il re difesi che in vita ognor l’amai. No questo cor giammai di fè mancar non sa.	Oath	C C → G	A

⁹ The lines in the score differ from those in the libretto («*Nata all’onor quest’alma*»). *Merope*, Botturini-Nasolini, Venezia 1795: Fenzo, I-Mb, Racc.dramm.4608. SEBASTIANO NASOLINI, *La Merope*, 1796, ms. I-Fc, Basevi B.58, II, cc. 74v-90v.

<i>(avvicinandosi alla tomba di Cresfonte)</i> Giuro...			
ANDANTE CON MOTO			
TUTTI Qual suon! <i>(comparisce l'ombra)</i> POLIFONTE Che vedo!	Interruption, ghost apparition	E flat	B
TUTTI Cresfonte! POLIFONTE "II Re!" ¹⁰			
<i>(l'ombra minaccia Polifonte)</i> [Numi...! Io...! Ah!]	Movement	→ B flat	
<i>(l'ombra s'avanza)</i> Minacci?		E flat	
<i>(l'ombra accenna che Polifonte l'uccise)</i> Io? Deh pietà di chiedo.		→ B flat	
Ah nel mirarlo io sento gelarsi il sangue in sen. "Placati <i>(in atto di supplicar l'ombra che lo scaccia)</i> TUTTI Qual orrore! POLIFONTE "Ascolta... <i>(l'ombra sparisce)</i> TUTTI Qual portento!	Movement, terror, disappearance	→ E flat C minor → A flat → G	
ALLEGRO POLIFONTE Ah dell'alma i rimorsi crudeli più tacer, più celarsi non sanno. Mille furie d'intorno mi stanno: mille furie mi sento nel cor.	<i>Stretto</i>	G → C	C
Chi mi toglie al mio barbaro affanno? Chi del cielo m'invola al furor?			
TUTTI Vanne fuggi, spergiuro, tiranno: teco porta il tuo fiero dolor.		C	
<i>Tutti partono sorpresi e confusi da diversi lati</i>			

Alongside Polifonte's intrigues,¹⁰ another plot takes shape, which is related to Timante, Merope's son. This storyline has its peak in the soprano's long aria in which the recovery of the lost son is staged.

The story begins as the young Egisto arrives at the royal palace with bloodstained clothes; the queen was led to believe that Egisto had killed her own son, thus she decided to sentence him to death. Later, Merope finds out that Egisto is none other than her beloved son Timante. The queen, then, leaves, trying to

¹⁰ The lines in inverted commas were not set to music; those in square brackets do not appear in the libretto.

rescue him, but she comes back on stage shortly after, asking everyone about her son, but no one is able to respond.

Merope's complex and long aria — «*Figlio, senti... Oh istante...! Oh pena...!*» — starts at the peak of her sorrow, serving as second-act finale.¹¹ The aria begins with a double agogic escalation; whilst the first two stanzas are marked as *Andante*, the third quatrain is split in two sections: the first two lines are set to music as a very brief transition in recitative style (*Allegro giusto*), whereas the second part is an even more lively furious coda, on whose last bars, Merope would like to leave but she is stopped by her servants.

With such intervention by chorus and pertichini, the kinetic section begins, modulating to the subdominant; those presents, matched by rhythmic modules in iambic style, try to dissuade the queen from taking her own life; following Merope's tearful reply, a sound is heard in the distance and yet another section begins (marked as *Poco più mosso*), built on a repeated pattern of iambic rhythmic modules. After that, a march played in the tonic by the winds begins: Timante arrives and the chorus calms the queen who, stunned, sings in recitative style; the section ends in the dominant in the general astonishment.

Then the *stretta* begins, with a proper *cabaletta* followed by a long transition and the repetition of the *cabaletta* leading the aria (and the act) to its conclusion.

ANDANTE SOSTENUTO 2/4			
MEROPE Figlio, senti... Oh istante...! Oh pena...! Veggio il ferro, che lo svena... Veggio il sangue... Veggio l'ombra che mi viene a funestar. Deh m'aspetta, ombra diletta; che di Lete il varco estremo teco bramo anch'io passar.	Grief	E flat → F	A ₁
ALLEGRO GIUSTO 4/4			
E tu reggi a tanto affanno né ti spezzi, o cor materno?	Intensification, attempted departure	B flat → G	A ₂
ALLEGRO ASSAI Furie, uscite dall'inferno la mia morte ad affrettar. (vuol partire)		E flat	A ₃
TEMPO DI PRIMA [ALLEGRO GIUSTO]			
CORO Ferma, ascolta.			

¹¹ S. Nasolini, *La Merope*. Op. cit., II, cc. 144r-172r.

<p>MEROPE Che bramate?</p> <p>CORO La tua pace, la tua vita.</p> <p>MEROPE Alme fide, se m'amate, deh lasciatemi spirar.</p>	<p>Interruption, chorus, dialogue</p>	<p>E flat → A flat</p>	<p>B₁</p>
<p>POCO PIÙ MOSSO</p>			
<p>RECITATIVO</p> <p>MEROPE Ah che miro! Il figlio...! Vieni: la tua madre, o figlio, abbraccia. (<i>Timante e Merope s'abbracciano</i>) Dal tuo sen, dalle tue braccia non mi posso, oh Dio, staccar.</p>	<p>Stabilization</p>	<p>B flat</p>	<p>B₃</p>
<p>ALLEGRO CON SPIRITO</p>			
<p>Vicina al figlio amato ritrovo alfin la calma: un tenero diletto tutto m'inonda il petto; e dagli dei quest'alma di più bramar non sa.</p>	<p>Cabaletta</p>	<p>E flat</p>	
<p>CORO Trionfa, esulta. Il figlio il nostro re sarà.</p> <p>TIMANTE Oh giorno...! Oh madre...! Il figlio ognor t'adorerà.</p> <p>MEROPE Ma contro il barbaro, che lo perseguita: (<i>accennando Nearco ed i seguaci di Polifonte</i>) contro que' perfidi ch'io veggo fremere, chi mai mio figlio difenderà?</p> <p>CORO Si mostri al popolo. Ognun combattere per lui saprà.</p>	<p>Ponte</p>	<p>E flat</p>	<p>C</p>
<p>[MEROPE Vicina al figlio amato ritrovo alfin la calma: un tenero diletto tutto m'inonda il petto; e dagli dei quest'alma di più bramar non sa.]</p>	<p>Cabaletta</p>	<p>E flat</p>	

To sum up: following a first position, expressed in an aria featuring a double agogic escalation, a *tempo di mezzo* gets into the musical-dramatic stream; this *tempo di mezzo* actually consists of three movements and includes:

- the interruption of Merope's departure by chorus and *pertichini* with a dialogue too;
- a sound signal with the entrance of a character, that is the recovery, followed by the comment of the chorus;
- Merope's astonishment and the subsequent stabilization.

The musical materialization of such dramatic sequence produces an aria which, albeit formally made of seven movements, has a *ternary dramaturgical structure*, featuring a first position that is turned upside down by a complex dynamization in three sections, which preludes to a *stretta* with *cabaletta*.

In this paper I attempted to give an overview of the multisectional dynamic arias, composed in the late 18th century, highlighting the diversity and complexity of the kinetic sections within them.

Whilst it is true that the so-called *solita forma* will tend to establish itself only in the early decades of the 19th century, it is also true that a certain range of musical and dramaturgic dynamizations had already been operating for at least thirty years; in fact, already in the latter part of the Age of Enlightenment, it is possible to recognize the sort of dynamization that much later would be named *tempo di mezzo*. Of course, such a systematization would occur completely only in the 19th century; however, these key scenes of the late 18th century provided significant models to start the adjustment phase that would take place in the early years of 19th century, resulting in the standardization, carried out by Rossini, of Italian Romantic opera.

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Де Маттеис, Паоло

магистр, аспирант, Университет Ёдине, Удине, Италия

Paolo De Matteis

MA, PhD candidate, University of Udine, Udine, Italy

paolodematteis7@gmail.com