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Reply to G.F. d'Acquapendente *tabulae pictae* on the nervous system

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Sir,

We do not think appropriate to afford here the second part of Riva's criticism, which makes reference to a paper by one of us (G.Z.) not printed in JHP [1]. However, although unfavourably impressed by the terms and general tone used in the above letter, we will answer the first part of it.

Riva's paper was not quoted since it does not represent, in our opinion, an accurate systematic anatomical and historical study of the *tabulae pictae*. Indeed, as the Author writes, his paper boasts to report "in synthesis the anatomical priorities present in all the *tabulae pictae*, including those on the *De Anatomia Capitis Cerebri Nervorum* described by Zanchin and De Caro". This quite difficult task – the *tabulae pictae* on human anatomy exceed the number of one hundred – is accomplished within a short paper (six pages, including bibliography, whose just one on the nervous system) by a mere anatomical listing, missing any iconography or argue to support and demonstrate the Author's opinion [2].

In conclusion, despite Riva's paper, we maintain that "...neither descriptions of the morphological aspects nor analysis of the research contents

of the *tabulae pictae* have ever been carried out...", at least if we have to deal with a scientific presentation.

For these reasons, our article is not "false and mendacious", as Riva writes: simply we did not quote his paper because we wanted to avoid a useless polemic [3]. Indeed, we disagree from its superficial comment on this outstanding accomplishment by d'Acquapendente, and from its assertive approach, including that on the Syluius's lateral tissue, without giving any element to allow readers' criticism: exactly the opposite of what was the didactic and scientific scope of the *tabulae pictae*.

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3. Zanchin G, De Caro R (2006) The nervous system in colours: the tabulae pictae of G. F. d'Acquapendente (ca. 1533-1619) *J Headache and Pain* 7:360–366