

**SPECIAL PAPER**

**Cases of Trephination in Ancient Greek Skulls**

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**Abstract**

**Background:** Trephination, or trepanning, is considered to be one of the most ancient surgical operations with an especially extensive geographical incidence, both in the New World and in the Old. In Europe, more than 200 finds of trephination have been found, from Scandinavia to the Balkans. The technique of trephination or trepanning covers overall the last 10,000 years and exhibits great versatility and adjustability in the knowledge, technical means, therapeutic needs, prejudices and social standards of each period and of each population group. Hippocrates was the one to classify for the first time the kinds of cranial fractures and define the conditions and circumstances for carrying out a trepanning.

**Aim:** The present research aims to investigate the Greek cranial trephinations on skulls from the collection of the Anthropological Museum of the Medical School of Athens that come from archaeological excavations.

**Method:** Skulls were examined by macroscopic observation with reflective light. Furthermore, radiographic representation of the skulls was used.

**Results:** The anthropological researches and the studies of anthropological skeleton remains that came out during archaeological excavations from different eras and areas have given information about the medical practices in the very important geographic area of Greece and in particular, we referred to cases of Greek trephinations.

**Key words:** trephination, craniotomy, ancient skulls, Hippocrates.