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Fossil traces of human thinking: studying the brain traces of extinct hominins



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Our brain, being a soft tissue, does not fossilize. However, it leaves its traces on the internal surface of the skull. Lobes and circonvolutions, veins and arteries, are engraved on the bone, and its anatomy can be studied in human fossils. In addition, the skull shape itself is the result of the brain pressure made during its development, so it can provide us with information about the encephalization process.

This process is not only characterized by the increase of the brain size, but also, by a change on its specific components, and by the relations between them. Those paleoneurologic studies can be carried out today thanks to the new technologies of digital anthropology, which allow us to produce computerized modes of the anatomic components and its geometric relations.

