

## **Hippocratic Hands, Sacred Boundaries: Surgery and its Dilemmas in Ancient Greece**

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### **Abstract**

*Background:* This article offers a comprehensive exploration of surgical techniques practiced in ancient Greece, tracing their development from prehistoric times through the Classical, Hellenistic, and Byzantine periods.

*Methods:* Drawing on literary, archaeological, and anatomical evidence, this examination explores procedures such as trepanation, fracture management, nasal and facial reconstruction, and early interventions in the abdominal and thoracic regions. Particular attention is given to the contributions of Hippocrates, Galen, and Paul of Aegina, whose systematic approaches to trauma, wound care, and operative techniques laid the foundation for later surgical traditions. The study also highlights the use of specialized instruments, pharmacological treatments, and ethical considerations rooted in mythological and philosophical thought.

*Results:* By highlighting the scientific sophistication and enduring influence of ancient Greek surgical practices, this work underscores their pivotal role in the development of Western medicine.

*Conclusions:* Ancient Greek surgery stands as a complex intersection of empirical skill, ethical reflection, and cultural meaning - a practice shaped as much by philosophical restraint as by technical ingenuity.

**Keywords:** ancient Greek surgery, Hippocratic medicine, trepanation, Paul of Aegina, surgical instruments, Byzantine medicine, history of surgery