

## Abstract

Anterior part of the skull is in embryos composed of two rod-like cartilages called *trabeculae cranii*. The final shape of the skull of jawed vertebrates is affected by the manner of composition of trabeculae. There are two types of arrangement of vertebrate skull: the platybasic, which is probably the original one, and the tropibasic, which has developed independently in birds, bony fishes and mammals. Jawless vertebrates (lampreys and hagfishes) also have cartilaginous elements called trabeculae, but there are doubts about homology of these structures between groups of jawed and jawless vertebrates. The trabeculae initially became interesting elements because of their possible position in premandibular segment as a former premandibular branchial arch. The two theories of origin of jaws, which do not assume there ever were any branchial arches before the mandibular, strictly disagree in the question of the nature of the *trabeculae cranii*.