Franz Joseph Gall Encyclopedia Article

Franz Joseph Gall

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Franz Joseph Gall

1758-1828

German physiologist and anatomist who was the originator of phrenology, the attempt to determine intelligence and personality from the shape of the skull. Gall was convinced that certain mental functions were centered in specific parts of the brain, and that the shape of a person's skull showed the degree of development of the various parts of his or her brain. His ideas were condemned by the Austrian government as anti-religious and he was forced out of the country in 1805. Though phrenology has been discredited, Gall's ideas about localized brain functions were later proven.