

5. The hidden beasts – Iron Age graffiti

On the back of some brooches we find animal figures etched into the metal plate. Sometime in the 400s someone etched a horse and a wolf on the back of this brooch. These “back-side beasts” are not part of the original design, but were probably made later by someone else.

The back-side animals are simpler and more naturalistic than those on the front. They turn towards the person wearing the brooch. Why place animals in places no one could see them? Perhaps people believed that close physical contact helped transfer the animal’s power to the person wearing the brooches.

In the case

1. Nordheim, Larvik, Vestfold and Telemark (Vestfold). C19858

