

6. Freya's jewellery?

The goddess Freya had a piece of jewellery called Brisingamen, which means "the glowing neckpiece". These brooches from the Migration Period (c AD 400–550) and the Merovingian Period (c AD 550–800) were worn at the neck. The gold would appear to glimmer like flames and the red garnets would glow like embers. The myths tell us that Freya could take on the shape of a bird, and bird's heads can be clearly seen on many of these brooches. Are they meant to represent Brisingamen? Were the women who owned them priestesses of Freya?

In Norwegian, the lady of the house is called a *husfrue*, from "house Freya". The ladies of the wealthiest Iron Age farms bore Freya's name in their title.

In the case

Brooches of gilt silver or copper alloy and garnets.

1. Relief brooch. Søtvat, Skien, Telemark and Vestfold (Telemark). C9441
2. Relief brooch. Falkum, Skien, Telemark and Vestfold (Telemark). C21856
3. Relief brooch. Offersøy, Øyen, Lødingen, Nordland. C8361
4. Relief brooch. Fonnås, Rendalen, Innlandet (Hedmark). C8154
5. Disc-on-bow brooch. Alfstad, Øystre Slidre, Innlandet (Oppland). C15041
6. Disc-on-bow brooch. Holen, Øyer, Innlandet (Oppland). C716
7. Disc-on-bow brooch. Haukenes, Hadsel, Nordland.
Loan: Norges arktiske universitetsmuseum. Ts6362
8. Disc-on-bow brooch. Bittestad, Hadsel, Nordland.
Loan: Norges arktiske universitetsmuseum. Ts12308/2 (Ts13785/250)

