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Ressort: Reise & Tourismus

The Stele Statues

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In the heart of Lunigiana, the enigmatic Stele Statues captivate archaeologists and historians. These ancient sculpted monoliths, dating back to the Bronze Age, depict human figures with mysterious symbols. Their meaning and origin remain an enigma, fueling the allure of these guardians of the past.

Enigmatic, captivating, and sometimes sparking the imagination of observers as they attempt to reconstruct missing parts, these are some of the characteristics of the unique statues found in the area around Pontremoli. But what are these Stele Statues, what is their ancestral significance, and what did they represent in ancient communities? All these questions are answered in a beautiful museum located in the Castello del Piagnaro, where visitors can take a leap back in time to discover our ancestors through the expert display of these remarkable artifacts.

Women are also depicted and can be recognized by the presence of breasts and ornaments. The facial features are minimal, sometimes nonexistent with a T-shaped face, and sometimes even lacking arms and feet. However, there is a classification system used to date the period in which these statues were made: Group A consists of the oldest statues, with minimal facial features; the head is U-shaped, the arms are essentially bas-reliefs, and sometimes they lack fingers.

Only in a few examples are the features barely suggested. Group B: slightly more recent than the previous group, these statues show greater care and skill in depicting human traits. In this type of stele statue, the head changes radically and is depicted with a “carabiniere hat” shape, and the presence of eyes starts to be suggested. Weapons are still present in the male statues, and in the female statues, the breasts are represented as semicircles, adorned with stylized jewelry.

Group C: This is the most recent group, showing progress in their craftsmanship. Upon closer examination of some of the displayed examples, a wide range of details and features can be observed, which were previously nonexistent. The heads are round, and the nose, mouth, eyes, and ears are easily recognizable. The same applies to the depicted weapons. The discoveries were entirely accidental, often found in fields or

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forests. Some have been repurposed in various ways by current owners, used to decorate homes, doorways, or gardens, without an understanding of the historical significance of these finds.

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