

PIETRA ITALIANATA

by Steve Dunlap

Dr. Steve Dunlap, M.D., Stone Foundation member and bon vivant, set out last summer on The Old Stone Road, in particular some notable sections of it that traverse northern Italy. His ostensible objective was to accompany a friend on a visit to relatives there. His underlying motive was to investigate a remarkable architectural feature that had come to his notice while examining a photograph in a book* about the the Duomo di Trento, a magnificent thirteenth century church. The photograph that excited his interest is shown here. Notice the knotted columns; actually it is not a knot, but a double bight, comprised of two interlocking loops.

I can understand Steve's fascination and why the device proliferated. It unites what is above with what is below, and vice versa. Like a lithical poem it plays with one's perception, mocking gravity. Rather than supporting the weight of the structure above it, the column seems to be holding it down. And rather than bringing weight to bear on the foundation, it seems to be lifting it up.



**Il Duomo Di Trento*, Architettura e scultura, Enrico Castelnuovo, Acriano Peroni (and others), 1992. Published by Editrice Temi, 38100 Trento, Italia. The excellent photographs and drawings the book contains recommend it even to non-readers of Italian.



Stephen visited me last summer with the book and a few hundred photographs. After a lengthy discussion, in respect of my interest in publishing some of the photographs, he left them with me to select some for the magazine and agreed to write about his pilgrimage. As he has not found the time to do so I have summarized his adventure in the preceding paragraphs and with selected photographs of the "knotted" columns, as well as a collage selected from images of other types of stonework that he deemed worthy of recording.

Thank you, Steve.

T.L.

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