

**A QUESTION OF  
THE WATER AND OF  
THE LAND**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649329038

A Question of the Water and of the Land by Danta Alighieri

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**DANTA ALIGHIERI**

**A QUESTION OF  
THE WATER AND OF  
THE LAND**



©

A

QUESTION OF THE WATER  
AND OF THE LAND

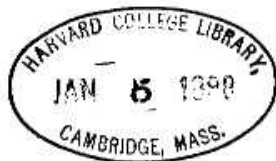
BY  
DANTE ALIGHIERI

*TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH, WITH AN  
INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY*

CHARLES HAMILTON BROMBY

LONDON  
DAVID NUTT, 270-271, STRAND  
1897

*Dm 351.4*



*The Translator*

Printed by BALLANTYNE, HANSON & Co.  
At the Ballantyne Press

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION . . . . .	7
A QUESTION OF THE WATER AND OF THE LAND . . . . .	17
QUESTION . . . . .	18
FIRST REASON . . . . .	19
SECOND REASON . . . . .	20
THIRD REASON . . . . .	21
FOURTH REASON . . . . .	22
FIFTH REASON . . . . .	23
ORDER OF THE QUESTION . . . . .	24
DETERMINATION IN TWO MODES . . . . .	25
FIRST AND SECOND SUPPOSITION . . . . .	26
DESTRUCTION OF THE FIRST MEMBER . . . . .	27
DESTRUCTION OF THE SECOND MEMBER . . . . .	31
HE CONCLUDES THAT THE WATER IS CONCENTRIC	34
HE ARGUES CONTRA; AND FIRST . . . . .	35
HE ARGUES AGAINST THE THINGS THAT HAVE BEEN DETERMINED . . . . .	36
THE PRECEDING REASON IS MET BY AN OBJECTION	39
THE OBJECTION IS ANSWERED . . . . .	40
OF THE EFFICIENT CAUSE OF THE ELEVATION OF THE LAND . . . . .	48





## INTRODUCTION

My apology for making a translation of this treatise into English is that no one else has done it. Of all the authentic works of Dante this alone remains untranslated. Professor Longhena, many years ago, translated it into Italian; besides that, I know of no one else who has put it into any modern language. And yet it has a peculiar interest apart from the fact that it is undoubtedly authentic.\* It is Dante's latest

\* I need not trouble the reader with all the arguments for and against the authenticity of the work. It breathes of Dante throughout. It seems, indeed, far more probable that Dante did write it, than that any one should have caught his style so closely, should not only have searched through his authorities with a care altogether out of proportion to any possible gain to be got by the perpetration of a forgery, and should have shown the same peculiarities in his quotation of many of those authorities. For some of these "undesigned

#### A QUESTION OF THE WATER

work, written a year before his death, and probably after the "Paradiso" was completed. It is interesting, too, as the only work of the kind we have from him, and it shows him in a new light, taking a part in the scientific discussions of the day. It is also most interesting as a specimen of the class of questions which were discussed then, and the manner of dealing with them. It is a good example of the intellectual exercises, or tournaments, in which men of intelligence and learning delighted at that time. And though it was not, perhaps,

coincidences "I may refer the reader to Dr. Moore's "Studies in Dante," especially pp. 105, 106.

As an example of the reasons given against its authenticity I may give one of Scartazzini's—that the idea of the tides being caused by the moon was undreamt of in Dante's day. Even if it was true that such a theory had not been known before Dante's time, it does not follow that the "Quaestio" is not a work of his, who in many ways was before his age. But, in fact, as is pointed out by Mr. Paget Toynbee, in his interesting article, published in a French magazine called *Romania*, in July 1895, the theory was known before Dante's time, and is mentioned by Albertus Magnus, who died in 1280, and who, when speaking of the moon, says, "ideo mare et omne humidum movet ex seipsa" (Tract 1, cap. 2).

AND OF THE LAND

intended as a very serious question, it is handled with all the seriousness of his grave nature, and is written in his most argumentative style. The excuse for writing it, that his enemies might not speak untruthfully of his views on the subject behind his back, and the bitter, if half humorous, sarcasm at the end, on those who would not come to hear the discourse, is typical of Dante.

I have ventured to add some notes of explanation and reference, but I have not attempted any thing like a commentary. To attempt a commentary would require more time and space than I am prepared to give, and I shrink from being the first to endeavour to explain some of the reasonings and expressions which I confess seem to me obscure and difficult.

To understand Dante's conception of the universe it is necessary to know something of the theories of the world and its surroundings as held by the principal astronomers among the ancients, Aristotle, Hipparchus, Ptolemy. Ptolemy, indeed, did little beyond enlarging on the teaching of Hipparchus, and drawing his