

***Purgatorio, Cantos I–XII***

**Cantos 1–5**, Ante-Purgatory: those who waited to repent their sins are saved, but must wait here before entering Purgatory

Cato “the Elder” of Utica (95–46 B.C.E.) (Canto 1.31–108, 2.118–23)

Considered by classical authors to be the embodiment of virtue and moral rectitude, he performs a function similar to Charon's in *Inferno* (i.e. he directs souls to where they ought to be). Cato reflects the four cardinal (moral) virtues, symbolized here by the four “holy” stars lighting his face (1.37–9): wisdom, justice, fortitude, and temperance.

Casella (Canto 2.76–114)

A singer and composer from Florence and Dante's great friend. Casella died sometime before 1300, but is now in Purgatory as a result of the plenary indulgence granted by Pope Boniface VIII on Christmas 1299 for the Jubilee year (1300).

Manfred (Canto 3.103–45)

The illegitimate son of Emperor Frederick II, Manfred (ca. 1232–1266) was excommunicated, but repented at the last moment. He informs Dante that the excommunicated must wait in Ante-Purgatory thirty times the length of their period of excommunication, unless the sentence is shortened by prayers of the living (3.136–41).

Belacqua (Canto 4.97–135)

Sitting in the shade of a large boulder, with his arms wrapped around his knees and his head lowered, Belacqua epitomizes the lazy spirits who waited until the last minute before repenting and turning to God. These souls must now wait in Ante-Purgatory for as long as they negligently delayed their repentance on earth: that is, the length of their mortal lives.

Buonconte da Montefeltro (Canto 5.85–129)

Mortally wounded in battle, Buonconte died with Mary's name on his lips. The subsequent struggle for Buonconte's soul repeats, with opposite results, the tussle between Saint Francis and the devil for the soul of Buonconte's father, Guido (*Inf.* 27.112–23). Here the good angel “wins” the soul for heaven, thus leaving the evil angel to punish Buonconte's corpse by bringing flooding rains that sweep the body downstream into the Arno, where it is buried in the riverbed (5.109–29).

**Cantos 6–9, Valley of Rulers****Angel at the Gate (Canto 9.76-132)**

Seated above three steps leading to the gate to the first terrace of Purgatory proper. The angel holds a sword, which he uses to carve seven P's—one for each of the seven deadly sins, *peccatum*—in Dante's forehead. The angel wears an ash-colored robe, from which he draws the two keys, one gold and one silver, he received from Peter to unlock the gate. The angel's feet are planted on the top step, which is bright red (like blood); the middle step is cracked and dark in color; the bottom step is made of white marble, so pure that it reflects images. The steps, from bottom to top, appear to represent three stages of penance: recognition of one's sins, heartfelt contrition, and absolution.

**Cantos 10–12, The Terrace of Pride (penitents here walk with large boulders on their backs, forcing them to walk slowly and bowed over in humility)**

As part of the purgatorial process, the spirits on each terrace, beginning here with pride, encounter examples of the virtue contrary to the vice for which they now suffer followed by examples of the vice itself. The examples Dante chooses from the life of Mary as the first representation of virtue on each terrace were well known from the popular *Speculum Beatae Mariae Virginis* (*Mirror of the Blessed Virgin Mary*).

**Examples of Humility and Pride (Cantos 10.28-96, 12.13-69)**

Carved into the side of the mountain on the first terrace are exemplary images of humility (Mary at the Annunciation, King David the “humble psalmist”, and the Roman Emperor Trajan, who delayed a glorious military campaign to avenge the murder of a poor widow's son) and pride (Lucifer, giants, and other biblical and classical figures)

**So...**

Why do you think Virgil, who was so sure and confident in *Inferno*, is frequently lost or confused at the start of *Purgatorio*?