

Marcus Tullius Cicero

Vita Gestaque Sua

Early Life

- Born Jan. 3rd, 106BC, in Arpinum – 60mi. S/E of Rome, 30mi. N/W of Naples – Southernmost region of Latium
- The *Tullii* were Oscan (Volsci) by blood; Cicero claimed Tullus Hostilius, the Third King, as an ancestor*

Early Life

- A father, Marcus; a brother, Quintus; mother died in childbirth of Quintus when Cicero was two
- Family are equestrians (*equites*); property (not income) must be at least 200,000 sesteratii = 55,000 denarii = \$1.182 million

Early Life

- 📌 98BC – Age 8 – Family moves to Rome to provide a better education for the children
- 📌 90BC – 17 years old – Cicero is conscripted into the military as a *tribunus militaris* in the Social Wars; serves under Pompey's father

Service

- Fought in northern Italy against Etruscans; met Q. Mucius Scaevola, who was a prominent orator and took Cicero under his wing after the war
- Comes home in 87BC rather sickly and frail

Training

- 📌 Cicero spent the next six years training under Scaevola to become a lawyer through apprenticeship in the Forum; would argue cases under the tutoring of Scaevola in court itself while practicing rhetoric on the side

Skips Town

- Cicero took on a series of cases in 84–80BC, that he won, but which brought him into conflict with Sulla, the dictator of Rome
- Accordingly, he decided to study in Greece (Athens) with his best friend Pomponius until things settled

Athens

- 📌 79BC – Age 27 – Arrived in Athens and studied under Apollonius Molo, considered to be the greatest living Greek orator, who had heard what talent Cicero already had
- 📌 Learned Greek rhetoric and incorporated it into the more direct but less logical Roman style

Athens

- 📌 Pomponius also thrives in Athens, who stays on as a teacher at the Stoa and earns the nickname *Atticus Romanus*, the “Athenian Roman”; Atticus remains Cicero’s best friend for life, and their correspondence forms the bulk of the biography we know about Cicero’s private life

Romam

- 📌 77BC - Age 29 - Cicero returns home a changed man; muscular, rugged, in good health, with amazing rhetorical skill and Greek training in the theater of speaking
- 📌 Marries Terrentia, a girl of 14 years, who gives birth to his beloved daughter Tullia soon afterwards; Terrentia's father soon dies with no sons, bringing Cicero a HUGE fortune (500,000+ sesterii)


Cursus Honorum

- 📌 76BC – Age 30 – Cicero stands for his first C.H. election (*quaestor*) and wins easily thanks to his speaking ability; assigned to Sicilia under the *propraetor* S. Peducaeus
- 📌 Discovers the tomb of Archimedes in Syracuse as a pet project

Cursus Honorum

- Must serve in the military before age 30 to qualify for any office
- Quaestor – 30 – Financial and logistical office – 2 in Rome to run the treasury, the rest assigned to provinces to manage taxes and funds
- Easy to steal money
- Automatically become a senator after term

Cursus Honorum

-  Tribunus Plebis - Plebeian only - Any age but must be quaestor first - Power of unlimited veto over all acts and laws, period; sacrosanct within the Pomerium (automatic death penalty to touch a T.P. without their consent)

Cursus Honorum

- Aedilis - 32 - Two curule and two plebeian - In charge of the city's public works and games - Take the money you stole as quaestor, throw a bunch of games, get elected to higher office
- Curule hold imperium, plebeian do not

Cursus Honorum

- Praetor - Imperium - 34 for patricians, 36 for plebeians - Served as judges of the permanent courts; 8; praetor urbanus heard criminal cases between citizens, praetor peregrinus between citizens and non-citizens, and the other heard civil matters

Cursus Honorum

- Propraetor – Imperium – After term as praetor, automatically assigned as a governor of one of the *provinciae stabiles* where no army was permanently stationed for a year
- Sicilia, Corsica, Gallia Cisalpina, Illyricum, Macedonia, Crete, Syria, Moesia

Cursus Honorum

- Consul - 42 - Imperium - Two consules, naming the year, heads of state; presided over the Senate and the Comitia Centuriata; lead the army; organized the *dies nefasti* by omen; could punish citizens unilaterally outside the city and with Comitial approval in the Pomerium

Cursus Honorum

- 📌 Proconsul – After term as consul, assigned as governor to a *provincia maioris imperii* with a permanent army for a year (border/dangerously unstable provinces)
- 📌 Could serve 5 years instead outside a province as a conquering governor (dux) with senatorial approval

Cursus Honorum

- Dictator – Like consul, but only one, unlimited imperium everywhere, and theoretically only serving once for six months (ha)
- Censor – Two ex-consuls for 18 months every 5 years; managed the orders of citizens (census) and could remove senators for un-senatorial activity

Assemblies

- Comitia Centuriata - All citizens organized into groups of 100 by money; rich vote first, and their votes count for more, making the poor comically useless
- Pass laws; elect magistrates; declares war and peace

Assemblies

- Concilium Plebis - All the plebeians organized by gens; elects tribuni plebis; pass laws; no act of the senate could be authorized without the approval of the Concilium Plebis

Assemblies

- Senate – All ex-magistrates – Cannot pass laws for the city, but *consultūs* were legally binding acts to force a magistrate to act in a certain way; appoints promagistrates and manages provinces
- *Senatūs consultum ultimum* – Suspend government and appoint a dictator

Cicero Again!

- Returns to Rome after quaestorship; resumes law practice, beloved by the southern Italian population, and famous for his legal prowess
- 70BC – Age 36 – Asked by Sicilians to prosecute the ex-propaetor L. Verres for unusually terrible corruption; wins and Verres is exiled for life

Aedilis

- 📌 69BC – Riding surge in name recognition after Verres, Cicero elected Aedilis and didn't even need to put on games; hugely popular without pandering to the masses
- 📌 Gave a free beef meal to every citizen in Rome, given to him by the people of Sicilia in thanks

Praetor

- 📌 67BC - Age 38 - Elected praetor urbanus; allowed now to speak from the Rostra in the Forum, retaining the power for life
- 📌 Speaks on behalf of Pompey being granted proconsular imperium for 5 years to fight pirates in the Mediterranean; formal alliance with the *optimates*

Praetor

- 📌 Strangely enough, Cicero turned down the proptraetorship of a province and decided to return to practicing law in the city; maybe designed to keep his name in the papers rather than leaving Rome for a year plus

Consular Elections of 64BC

- Cicero turns 42 and runs in 64BC for term of 63BC; facing off against G. Antonius, father of M. Antonius, and L. Catilina
- Cicero's family had never produced a consul – *Novus Homo* – VERY unlikely to win, despite his major popularity

L. Sergius Catilina

- Gens Sergia was old patrician family with a dozen consulships through the centuries; supposedly the first Sergius came with Aeneas to Italy
- Catiline attacked Cicero as a “foreigner from Arpinum” and a piece of rustic garbage

L. Sergius Catilina

- However, Catilina's spoiled attitude had soured L. Crassus, Pompey, and a newly-rising Caesar (amongst others) from supporting him for consul, and Cicero's support of Pompey as praetor had won over a friend
- Cicero elected; first N.H. in 83 years, last one of the Republic

Catilinarian Conspiracy

- Catilina is a little less than a gracious loser... he marches to Florence with a truck full of gold and raises an army in Etruria, determined to march into Rome and take the consulship by the sword “like Sulla did”

Catilinarian Conspiracy

- 📌 Cicero discovers the conspiracy in October 63BC, when the mistress of one of Catilina's "generals" gets mad and brings him a letter from Catilina to senators, promising appointment to office when he's dictator in exchange for their support

Catilinarian Conspiracy

- Cicero compels the Senate to vote Catilina “*Hostis Gentis Romanae*,” enemy of the Roman people, which commands all citizens to kill Catilina if they encounter him; Comitia Centuriata declares war on the rebels
- But Cicero must suppress the conspiracy in the city to maintain secrecy before the army can march north

Catilinarian Conspiracy

- 📌 Cicero gets senatorial approval to arrest six conspirators and imprison them in the Mamertine Prison in the Forum; when a rumor reaches Cicero that allies are planning to break them out, he orders the prisoners put to death by strangulation that very day. Ops.

Catilinarian Conspiracy

- Unsurprisingly, a bunch of pig farmers from Tuscany holding sticks can't defeat a legion; Cicero marches north to Florence and annihilates Catilina's rebellion
- Catilina is killed in the battle; he body is hung in chains in the Forum until it rots off the gibbet

Cicero Triumphant

- 📌 By the end of November 63BC, Cicero is considered the savior of the Republic; he is awarded a triumph and hailed as the preeminent man in Rome
- 📌 After his term, Cicero again declines to become a governor and turns to practicing law again

Glory is Fleeting

- 📌 62BC – Age 44 – Bona Dea Scandal – Caesar, who is pontifex maximus, holds the Rite of the Bona Dea in his house, per custom; NO MEN ALLOWED, not even animals
- 📌 While Caesar is “enjoying” himself, a man named P. Claudius Pulcher sneaks in dressed as a woman – SCANDAL

Bona Dea

- Claudius is prosecuted for sacrilege, which carries mandatory exile; he bribes the praetor and is acquitted
- Cicero calls him out personally in the Senate for the blatant corruption, earning an enemy who seriously impacts the rest of his life

Clodius

- 📌 Claudius is the very definition of “opportunistic d-bag”; too unstable, corrupt, and unhinged to be elected by his fellow patricians, he arranges a plebeian two years younger than him to legally adopt him, changes his name to “Clodius” (ghetto Latin pronunciation) and runs for Tribune

Clodius

- 📌 Elected Tribunus Plebis, Clodius forces a law through the C. Plebis which mandates *post facto* exile for anyone who has condemned a Roman citizen to death within the past ten years in their capacity as magistrate.
- 📌 Huh, the only one who qualifies is Cicero; funny that!

Exile

- As Tribune, Clodius is sacrosanct, and Ciceo actually respects the law and Roman government ideals; he willingly but sadly goes into exile in 59BC (age 46) to Thessalonica in Greece, not far from where Byzantium would be centuries later
- Clodius literally burns Cicero's house down

Republic Dying

- Catilina and Clodius herald the doom of the Republic: a generation of patricians and politicians who view government as a means to power and wealth, not public service
- Clodius' chaotic influence as Tribune is so bad that Crassus, Pompey, and Caesar form the First Triumvirate in 58BC

Recall

- 📌 57BC – Age 49 – Q. Caecilius Nepos, the cousin of Atticus, is consul; he compels the law exiling Cicero to be repealed, allowing him to return happily to the city; his daughter Tullia rushes to him at the city gates and kisses him as he comes home
- 📌 House rebuilt at public expense

Triumvirate

- As a friend of both Caesar and Pompey, Cicero is safe and influential, but not in charge; the triumvirate runs things.
- Clodius is marginalized for a short time by Crassus spending more money than Clodius can dream of

Triumvirate Collapses

- 📌 54BC - Caesar appointed proconsul of Gallia Transalpina; fights the Gallic Wars
- 📌 53BC - Crassus murdered in Parthia in a masterful display of irony
- 📌 52BC - Clodius angers the wrong guy and despite being Tribune is murdered in the street by a man named Milo

Pro Milone

- 📌 Cicero hates Clodius and defends Milo in court
- 📌 Hopeless; dozens saw him do it, and Milo flees Italia before trial ends
- 📌 Cicero feels somewhat compromised for defending a man who so obviously violated the “constitution”

Proconsul

- 📌 End of 52BC - A consul dies, causing a void in governor appointments; Cicero volunteers to serve, and is appointed proconsul of Asia Minor
- 📌 His brother Quintus happened to be general in charge of his province's army
- 📌 Back in Rome Jan. 4, 49BC

Civil War

- Rome has gone to hell during his absence; Caesar crosses the Rubicon on Jan. 29 49BC and is declared Enemy of the Republic the next day, triggering the Civil Wars
- Cicero, as an Optimas, sides with Pompey, becomes Legate of a legion in the Republican army; he writes that he thinks Caesar will win, but thinks Pompey just

Civil War

- Cicero fights at Brundisium in Italia and Pharsalos in Greece; after Pompey is decisively defeated at Pharsalos, Cicero defects and begs mercy from Caesar, who as a friend forgives and pardons him; he returns to Rome, deeply ashamed of his acts to save his own life

The Last Years

- 📌 46BC - Cicero divorces his wife Terrentia after 35 years of marriage for unspecified reasons; she gets to keep her inheritance, leaving Cicero embarrassingly poor; he marries his adopted daughter Publia, who has an inheritance of her own, but divorces her in less than a year

The Last Years

- 📌 45BC – Tullia dies while pregnant; Cicero is devastated and left a changed man, fatalistic and consigned to the fact that a man's actions are ultimately pointless and futile
- 📌 He retreats to his villa at Tusculum to write, drink, and find some way to avoid thinking about his daughter

The Last Years

- Caesar is killed Mar. 15 44BC
- Cicero is reinvigorated by the notion of the Republic being restored; he rushes back to Rome and gives the Philippic Orations, three speeches on the Rostra calling Antony a drunk animal too dumb to manage his own clothes, let alone the state

The Last Years

- 📌 Alas, the Second Triumvirate is formed: Antony, Lepidus, Octavian
- 📌 Antony presents a list of enemies to be murdered as soon as possible, and Cicero is at the top of the list
- 📌 Octavian tries for three weeks to change his mind, but to no avail

The End

- Cicero is killed at his villa in Tusculum on Dec. 7 43BC by a hired soldier that Cicero had himself defended in a murder case from 20 years beforehand
- Antony had his hands and head nailed to the Rostra; the rest of his body was cremated and buried along the Via Flaminia outside the city