

Lucius Manlius Torquatus - Main Biography

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Lucius Manlius Torquatus (died 46 BC) was a [Roman](#) politician and military commander. He was active during the [Crisis of the Roman Republic](#) and [Caesar's Civil War](#). He commanded troops at the battles of [Oricum](#), [Dyrrhachium](#) and [Thapsus](#). The last of these ended the war, in a defeat for the faction Torquatus supported; he escaped the field, but was captured and killed shortly after. He is portrayed by [Cicero](#) in [De Finibus](#) as a spokesman advocating [Epicurean ethics](#).

Biography[[edit](#)]

Early life[[edit](#)]

Torquatus was the son of [Lucius Manlius Torquatus](#), and belonged to the [patrician Manlia gens](#), one of the oldest Roman houses. In 69 BC he was elected a member of the [Quindecimviri sacris faciundis](#), a senior religious [collegium](#).^[1] In 66 BC he was the first to accuse newly elected [consuls Publius Cornelius Sulla](#) and [Publius Autronius Paetus](#), the consul designates for the following year, of bribery in connection with the elections, thereby securing the election of his father in 65.^[2]

Torquatus was closely aligned with [Cicero](#), both strong supporters of the self described [boni](#) (good men). The boni were the traditionalist senatorial majority of the [Roman Republic](#), politicians who believed that the role of the [Senate](#) was being usurped by the [legislative people's assemblies](#) for the benefit of a few power hungry individuals. The boni were against anyone who attempted to use these legislative assemblies to reform the state. As a fellow [senator](#) Torquatus supported Cicero during his [praetorship](#) in 66 BC and his tumultuous [consulship](#) in 63. After Cicero had beaten him to the consulship, the distinguished ex-general and military governor [Lucius Sergius Catilina](#) led [a conspiracy](#) centered on assassinating Cicero and overthrowing the Republic with the help of foreign armed forces. Three years earlier, Torquatus' father and Cicero had publicly supported Catilina when he was unsuccessfully prosecuted for corruption and abuse of office. Despite this, Torquatus vigorously supported the Senate's efforts, which resulted in them unmasking the conspirators, capturing and executing several. The following year Catilina, with what was left of his army, was cornered by three [legions](#) and killed.^[3]

By this time, Torquatus and Cicero were on opposite sides. Torquatus accused Publius Cornelius Sulla of being a part of Catilina's conspiracies.^[4] Sulla had been an enemy for the four years since Torquatus had accused him of bribery, resulting in his being tried, convicted and, under the [Lex Acilia Calpurnia](#), deprived of the consulship, being replaced by Torquatus' father, and expelled from the Senate.^{[5][6]} Torquatus prosecuted Sulla for plotting the revenge killing of

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his father, while Cicero defended the accused. Torquatus accused Sulla of raising a force of armed men in 66 to secure the consulship for Catilina and murder the ruling consuls Lucius Manlius Torquatus, Torquatus' father, and [Lucius Aurelius Cotta](#).^[7] He also accused Cicero of manufacturing evidence.^[8] This was the occasion for Cicero delivering his [Pro Sulla](#) speech. Sulla was acquitted, almost certainly due to Cicero's oratory skills. Sulla's cousins, Publius and Servius, were not so fortunate, as Cicero refused to consider defending them.^[9]