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Tiberius' position in the imperial family and his place in Augustus' dynastic plans from 29 BC to 6 BC**

Pozycja Tyberiusza w rodzinie cesarskiej i jego miejsce
w planach dynastycznych Augusta w latach 29 p.n.e.–6 p.n.e.

Streszczenie: W niniejszym artykule próbuję ustalić, jaka była pozycja Tyberiusza w rodzinie cesarskiej oraz jaką rolę odgrywał on w planach sukcesyjnych Augusta przed swoim wyjazdem na Rodos w 6 roku p.n.e. Z przeprowadzonej w artykule analizy różnych kategorii źródeł wynika, że Tyberiusz był w tym okresie jedynie drugorzędnym kandydatem do sukcesji, znajdując się wyraźnie w cieniu najpierw Marcellusa i Agryppy, a następnie Gajusza i Lucjusza Cezarów. Dopiero śmierć adoptowanych synów Augusta w 2 i 4 roku n.e. otworzyła Tyberiuszowi drogę do władzy cesarskiej.

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** This paper is a modified version of an excerpt from my book, *Sukcesja władzy cesarskiej w okresie rządów dynastii julijsko-klaudyjskiej (30 p.n.e.–68 n.e.)*, Poznań 2016. See p. 41–46.

Abstract: In the present text I am trying to establish what was Tiberius position in the imperial family and what was the role he played in Augustus succession plans before his leaving to Rhodes in 6 BC. The analysis of different categories of sources carried out in the article shows that Tiberius was at that time only the minor candidate to succession, finding himself overshadowed by Marcellus and Agrippa, and then by Gaius and Lucius Caesar. Only Augustus adopted sons' death in 2 AD and 4 AD opened Tiberius the way to the imperial power.

Słowa kluczowe: Tyberiusz, polityka dynastyczna Augusta, sukcesja władzy cesarskiej

Keywords: Tiberius, dynastic policy of Augustus, succession of imperial power

The death of Lucius and Gaius Caesar in 2 AD and 4 AD respectively did not just deal Augustus a painful blow; it also ruined his hopes that one of his adoptive sons would succeed him¹. Accordingly, the princeps had to rely on Tiberius as a potential successor. His adoption in 4 AD and granting him *tribunicia potestas* and *imperium proconsulare*, the two fundamental prerogatives of the princeps, meant that Tiberius was officially designated Augustus' heir². That process reached its crowning point when in 13 AD Tiberius was given *imperium aequum* (in reference to the powers held by the princeps in all the provinces of the Empire), thus making him Augustus' formal co-ruler, which made it possible for him to smoothly take over as emperor a year later³.

¹ Vell. Pat. 2, 102; Tac. *Ann.* 1, 3, 3; Suet. *Aug.* 65, 1; Cass. Dio 55, 10a, 9; see D. Kienast, *Römische Kaisertabelle. Grundzüge einer römischen Kaiserchronologie*, Darmstadt 1996, p. 74–75.

² Vell. Pat. 2, 103; Suet. *Tib.* 15-16; Cass. Dio 55, 13, 2. On Tiberius' adoption and granting him tribunician powers and *imperium*, see, e.g., H. U. Instinsky, *Augustus und die Adoption des Tiberius*, 'Hermes' 1966, 94, p. 324–343; R. A. Birth, *The Settlement of 26 June A. D. 4 and Its Aftermath*, 'Classical Quarterly' 1981, 31.2, p. 443–456; M. H. Dettenhofer, *Herrschaft und Widerstand im augusteischen Principat. Die Konkurrenz zwischen Res Publica und Domus Augusta*, Stuttgart 2000, p. 181–183; B. Severy, *Augustus and the Family at the Birth of the Roman Empire*, London–New York 2003, p. 189–192.

³ Vell. Pat. 2, 121; Suet. *Tib.* 21, 1; see also D. Kienast, *Augustus. Prinzeps und Monarch*, Darmstadt 1982, p. 122; P. Sawiński, *Specjalni wysłannicy cesarscy w okresie od*

At this point the question arises regarding the role Tiberius played in Augustus' dynastic plans before he was adopted in 4 AD. For while researchers generally agree that after being adopted he unquestionably had the status of the heir to the 'throne', his place in Augustus' succession plans before that point remains open for discussion⁴. Thus in this paper I endeavour to determine the position held by Livia's son in the *domus Augusta*⁵ in the years preceding his adoption, as well as to answer the question of whether he was seen during that time as a possible successor to Augustus. As regards chronology, I take the discussion as far as 6 BC, when Tiberius withdrew from politics and retired to Rhodes.

Augustus' actions in the sphere of dynastic policy during the early years of his single-handed rule clearly demonstrate that Tiberius remained eclipsed by Marcellus, the emperor's nephew and son-in-law, whom the princeps assigned an important role during that time within the reigning

Augusta do Tyberiusza. Studium nad początkami pryncypatu, [in:] *Xenia Posnaniensia – Monografie*, t. 4, eds. L. Mrozewicz, M. Musielak, Poznań 2005, p. 31.

⁴ On Tiberius' image as that of Augustus' future heir, see P. Sawiński, *Sukcesja władzy cesarskiej w okresie rządów dynastii julijsko-klaudyjskiej (30 p.n.e.–68 n.e.)*, Poznań 2016, p. 85–92.

⁵ When referring to the emperor's family, I use the term *domus Augusta*. However, it is worth emphasizing here that the expression only makes its appearance in sources towards the end of Augustus' reign, in 13 AD at the earliest. The first known author to refer to the family in this way is Ovid. See Ovid. *Ponto*. 2, 2, 74. For more on the subject, see F. Millar, *Ovid and the Domus Augusta. Rome Seen from Tomoi*, 'Journal of Roman Studies' 1993, 83, p. 1–17; M. B. Flory, *Dynastic Ideology, the Domus Augusta, and Imperial Women. A Lost Statuary Group in the Circus Flaminius*, 'Transactions of the American Philological Association' 1996, 126, p. 287–306; B. Severy, op. cit., p. 214 and 216. In principle, the *domus Augusta* was composed of two families: *domus Iuliorum Claudiorumque*, or *Claudia et Iulia domus*. See Tac. *Hist.* 1, 16; *Ann.* 6, 8, 3; M. Corbier, *Male Power and Legitimacy through Women. The Domus Augusta under the Julio-Claudians*, [in:] *Women in Antiquity. New Assessments*, eds. R. Hawley, B. Levick, London–New York 1995, p. 190. In 21 BC it was joined by M. Agrippa, owing to his marriage to Julia, even though he was neither a Julius nor a Claudius. See Tac. *Hist.* 1, 15. For more detail on the meaning of the terms *familia* and *domus* in Roman society, see primarily R. Saller, *Familia, domus, and the Roman Conception of the Family*, 'Phoenix' 1984, 38, p. 336–355; L. Olszewski, *Upadłe i boskie. Ubóstwienie cesarzowych i księżniczek z dynastii julijsko-klaudyjskiej (30 rok przed Chr.–68 rok po Chr.)*, Poznań 2002 (unpublished doctoral dissertation available at the library of Adam Mickiewicz University), p. 134–136.

family he was building. In that context one account by Suetonius, among others, is telling; I mean his account of Octavian's triumph over Egypt and Dalmatia, which took place in 29 BC. As we know, both boys took part in the triumph. Now it is not casually that Suetonius mentions Marcellus riding to the right of the quadriga, which carried more honour than the left side. Moreover, it was only in Marcellus' name that Octavian⁶ had the appropriate monetary gratifications handed out to plebeian children on the occasion of that triumph⁷. It was certainly no accident that Tiberius was excluded from a project whose goal it was to ensure that Augustus' nephew would enjoy the sympathies of the poor among the inhabitants of Rome. More evidence for the notion that the princeps favoured Marcellus can be found in the special privileges awarded him in 24 BC, meant to markedly accelerate his *cursus honorum*. In Cassius Dio we further read that he was counted among the members of the Senate and granted the right to vote together with the ex-praetors. He could also stand for consulship ten years earlier than the standard minimum age set at the time for candidates for consul, and he was designated aedile for the following year⁸. Those privileges are in sharp contrast to how Tiberius was acknowledged at the same time, for according to Dio he was only allowed to run for every magistracy five years before the customary age, and was designated quaestor⁹.

Marcellus' unexpected death in 23 BC did not affect Tiberius' standing within the *domus Augusta*; two years later, the widowed Julia was given in marriage to M. Agrippa, a friend of Augustus and *de facto* the second most powerful man in the Empire after the princeps¹⁰. Then in 18 BC,

⁶ When referring to Augustus' actions before 27 BC I call him 'Octavian'. Actually, though after the future princeps was adopted by Julius Caesar, he only referred to himself as 'Caesar' and never used his old *cognomen* of Octavius. See D. Kienast, *Römische Kaisertabelle...*, p. 61. It is also widespread in literature to call the young Caesar Octavian. See e. g. B. Levick, *Augustus. Image and Substance*, London–New York 2010, p. 5.

⁷ Cass. Dio 51, 21, 3; cf. also M. H. Dettenhofer, op. cit., p. 96.

⁸ Cass. Dio 53, 28, 3; cf. M. H. Dettenhofer, op. cit., p. 96; B. Severy, op. cit., p. 68.

⁹ Cass. Dio 53, 28, 3.

¹⁰ Vell. Pat. 2, 93; Tac. *Hist.* 1, 15; S. Treggiari, *Roman Marriage. Iusti Coniuges from the Time of Cicero to the Time of Ulpian*, Oxford 1991, p. 138; M. Corbier, op. cit., p. 182; R. A. Bauman, *Women and Politics in Ancient Rome*, London–New York 2003, p. 101.

Agrippa was the first member of the ruling family other than the emperor himself to receive *tribunicia potestas*, which formally speaking made him Augustus' co-ruler (*collega imperii*)¹¹. In 17 BC, the princeps adopted Gaius and Lucius, the sons of Agrippa and Julia, clearly indicating that one of the boys would succeed him¹². And finally, in the same year, equipped with exceptional powers (the *imperium maius*), Agrippa was sent to the East, where he would act as the emperor's special envoy until 13 BC¹³.

If we look at Tiberius' political career during the same period, it will seem very modest compared to Agrippa's spectacular position on the Roman political scene. In 20 BC Tiberius, most likely acting as *legatus Augusti*, normalized the situation in Armenia, placing a pro-Roman ruler on its throne¹⁴. In 16 BC, he was praetor, and a year later, together with Drusus, and again as *legatus Augusti*, he led an expedition against Alpine tribes¹⁵. Thus during those two expeditions he did not enjoy the status of a commander with *imperium* of his own, which would give him the right to being acclaimed *imperator* and to a triumph. Tiberius' rank in the imperial family as that of a stepson of the emperor was by no means comparable to that of Agrippa, Augustus' son-in-law and the natural father of his prospective heirs. That is clearly indicated by the many statuary groups erected during that time in honour of the *domus Augusta* in a number of locations throughout the Empire. While statues of Agrippa were an integral part of

¹¹ Cass. Dio 54, 12, 4; M. Reinhold, *Marcus Agrippa. A Biography*, Geneva–New York 1933, p. 99–100; D. Kienast, *Römische Kaisertabelle...*, p. 72; F. Hurler, *Les collègues du prince sous Auguste et Tibère. De la légalité républicaine à la légitimité dynastique*, Roma 1997, p. 61–65. It is on the other hand debatable whether that meant designating Agrippa Augustus' heir. On Agrippa as Augustus' *collega imperii* and potential heir, see P. Sawiński, *Marcus Agrippa. Collega imperii or successor to Augustus. The Succession Issue between 23 and 12 BC*, 'Palamedes' 2013, 8, p. 141–154.

¹² Cass. Dio 54, 18, 1–2; Vell. Pat. 2, 96.

¹³ On the subject of Agrippa's second Eastern mission, see e. g. M. Reinhold, op. cit., p. 106–123; M. Roddaz, *Marcus Agrippa*, Roma 1984, p. 419–475; P. Sawiński, *Specjalni...*, p. 79–81.

¹⁴ Vell. Pat. 2, 94; Tac. *Ann.* 2, 3, 2; *RGDA*, 27.

¹⁵ See D. Kienast, *Römische Kaisertabelle...*, p. 76.

those, it was only very rarely that Tiberius was celebrated in that way before his adoption¹⁶.

Combined with the fact that Gaius and Lucius were still children, Agrippa's death in 12 BC forced the princeps to rely on his stepsons as aides in ruling the Empire. They were expected to replace his dead friend in that role. Analysing the political and military careers of Tiberius and Drusus the Elder between 12 and 9 BC, that is until the latter's death, does not clearly indicate that Augustus favoured one of Livia's sons over the other¹⁷. Tiberius held his first consulship as early as 13 BC. In the following year he became the commander in the Pannonian campaign, which he later, probably beginning in 11 BC, led with an independent *imperium*, earning himself the title of *imperator* and an ovation, which he held in 9 BC¹⁸. Drusus' career ran a similar course. In 12 BC Augustus entrusted him with running military operations in Germania. From 10 BC on, he acted there as an independent commander, based on the *imperium proconsulare* awarded him. For his successes on the German front he also received the title of *imperator* and was awarded an ovation¹⁹. Then in 9 BC he was consul, too²⁰.

While the *cursus honorum* of Augustus' two stepsons was, as I have already mentioned, much the same, their ranks in the imperial family differed greatly. Tiberius stood no doubt higher in the hierarchy of the *domus Augusta*, which he owed primarily to his marriage to Julia. Already in 12 BC Augustus convinced his stepson to divorce Vipsania, a daughter of Agrippa by his first wife, and become engaged to Julia²¹. Since, as Agrippa's

¹⁶ See Ch. B. Rose, *Dynastic Commemoration and Imperial Portraiture in the Julio-Claudian Period*, Cambridge 1997, p. 13–14 and 61–62.

¹⁷ Cassius Dio (54, 31, 1) on the other hand underlines how Augustus singled out Tiberius as the replacement for Agrippa, although I do not find Dio's opinion convincing here. It is also criticized by J. W. Rich, *Cassius Dio. The Augustan Settlement (Roman History 53–55.9)*, Warminster 1990, p. 209. Cf. also M. H. Dettenhofer, op. cit., p. 161–162.

¹⁸ D. Kienast, *Römische Kaisertabelle...*, p. 76 and 78; P. Sawiński, *Specjalni...*, p. 30–31.

¹⁹ Cass. Dio 54, 33, 5; Suet. *Claud.* 1, 3; P. Sawiński, op. cit., p. 30, 88 and 92. However, Drusus' premature death in Germania meant he never held the ovation.

²⁰ D. Kienast, *Römische Kaisertabelle...*, p. 69.

²¹ Cass. Dio 54, 31, 2. Suetonius (*Tib.* 7, 2) says that Tiberius was reluctant to divorce his previous wife, to whom he was devoted.

widow, Julia needed to stay in mourning for a definite time before she remarried, they were only married a year later²². According to Suetonius, Augustus spent a long time thinking about candidates for Julia's husband, even considering the possibility of marrying her to a member of the equestrian order. Eventually he chose Tiberius though²³. I believe we should be very careful about accepting that account. Given that until then the princeps had selected sons-in-law from among his close relations, it is difficult to suppose he would now choose a man from outside the narrow circle of the *domus Augusta*. In that context, Tiberius was, alongside Drusus, the only candidate²⁴. One must undoubtedly agree with the opinion of Velleius Paterculus that the marriage to Julia considerably strengthened Tiberius' position in the imperial family, binding him to Augustus even more closely²⁵, but I do not think it meant that Augustus was designating Tiberius as his political successor²⁶. As I mention above, the adoption of the sons of Agrippa and Julia by the princeps in 17 BC clearly indicates that Augustus intended for one of the young Caesares to become his heir in the future. On the other hand, it is of course difficult to tell what would have happened if Augustus had died before his adoptive sons reached the age when they could rule in their own right. In that, speculation is all that is left to us; however, it would seem that under such circumstances Tiberius' chances to take over the emperor's inheritance would have increased dramatically.

²² Vell. Pat. 2, 96; Cass. Dio 54, 35, 4; Suet. *Aug.* 63, 2; *Tib.* 7, 2; S. Treggiari, op. cit., p. 155; D. Kienast, *Römische Kaisertabelle...*, p. 76. J. W. Rich (op. cit., p. 209 and 216) supposes that the marriage ceremony may have taken place in Gaul or somewhere in northern Italy in the winter of 11/10 BC, or perhaps after Tiberius' return to Rome in 10 BC. B. Severy (op. cit., p. 67 and 161) disagrees, dating his marriage to Julia to 12 BC, since she assumes that according to Augustus' matrimony laws Julia had to marry again within a few months of Agrippa's death.

²³ Suet. *Aug.* 63.

²⁴ See B. Severy, op. cit., p. 67. It is possible that the emperor chose Tiberius over his brother, because he was the elder of the two.

²⁵ Vell. Pat. 2, 96. See also P. Sattler, *Julia und Tiberius. Beiträge zur römischen Innenpolitik zwischen den Jahren 12 v. und 2 n. Chr.*, [in:] *Augustus*, hrsg. von W. Schmitthenner, Darmstadt 1969, p. 497; M. H. Dettenhofer, op. cit., p. 165.

²⁶ So also B. Severy, op. cit., p. 67 and 161; *contra* J. H. Corbett, *The Succession Policy of Augustus*, 'Latomus' 1974, 33.1, p. 87–97.

Peter Sattler thinks Tiberius may have also counted on his marriage to Julia producing some male issue, who could then provide serious competition for Gaius and Lucius when it came to succession. From Suetonius we know that Julia did give birth to a son in 10 BC, but he died while still an infant. Sattler supposes that had he lived longer, he would have been adopted by the princeps and as a descendant of both Augustus and Livia would have been more predisposed to succeed the emperor than either of the young Caesares²⁷. Actually, his claim is very debatable. First, any thoughts we might have about Augustus' possible plans regarding Julia and Tiberius' prematurely dead son are purely speculative. Second, if Augustus had wanted his future heir to be not only descended from him, but also related to Livia, he would have married Julia off to Tiberius immediately, and not arranged her marriages to Marcellus and Agrippa first. In my opinion that indicates that Julia played a key role in Augustus' familial plans; seeing as he did not have a son of his own, she became, to quote Mireille Corbier, 'responsible to produce a successor'²⁸. Thus I believe that Augustus was mostly interested in his successor being related to him by blood, whereas whether he would be descended from Livia was of secondary importance to him. Third, the case of Agrippa Postumus, born in 12 BC, shows that the emperor was not going to adopt any further sons of Julia's. As we know, it was only after the death of his two elder brothers that Postumus was adopted by the princeps at the same time as Tiberius. Therefore, I do not see much point in the emperor deliberately complicating the succession by creating more claimants through successive adoptions.

After Drusus died in 9 BC, Tiberius became Augustus' *de facto* second-in-command, since both his adoptive sons were still too young to be entrusted with serious political or military duties. In 8 BC, Tiberius left for Germania, to finish his prematurely dead brother's work there. His panegyrist Velleius Paterculus claims with unquestionable exaggeration (typical of all his accounts of Tiberius' military achievements) that the campaign ended in lightning-fast conquest of Germania, which was subsequently

²⁷ Suet. *Tib.* 7, 3; P. Sattler, op. cit., p. 497–498 and 502.

²⁸ M. Corbier, op. cit., p. 182.

made into a Roman province²⁹. For these services Tiberius was for the second time acclaimed *imperator* and rewarded with a triumph, which took place one year later³⁰. It bears emphasizing here that he was the first member of the emperor's family to receive that honour since 19 BC, when Augustus practically reserved the right to triumph for himself and others of the *domus Augusta*, and especially potential successors³¹. In 7 BC Tiberius held his second consulship³², and in 6 BC he received the special honour of being granted, at Augustus' initiative, *tribunicia potestas* for five years³³. Many historians assume that at the same time the *imperium proconsulare* he first received in 11 BC was prolonged for another five years as well. They suggest that since he was sent on a new mission in the East, implying the possibility of interfering with the management of provinces there by senatorial proconsuls, that *imperium* must have been *maius* in relation to the powers of those governors³⁴. Considering the nature of that mission, which did in fact include the possibility of infringing on the prerogatives of those senatorial proconsuls, that assumption appears quite logical; granting Tiberius such powers could have forestalled any conflict with the

²⁹ Vell. Pat. 2, 97.

³⁰ Vell. Pat. 2, 97; Cass. Dio 55, 6, 3-5; F. V. Hickson, *Augustus 'Triumphator'. Manipulation of the Triumphal Theme in the Political Program of Augustus*, 'Latomus' 1991, 50.1, p. 129; P. Sawiński, op. cit., p. 88 and 90.

³¹ Before that, triumph was also twice accorded M. Agrippa, first in 19 BC for suppressing the Cantabrian uprising in Spain, and then in 14 BC for normalizing the situation in the Rome-dependent Bosphoran Kingdom. In each case, however, Agrippa refused the honour, Cass. Dio 54, 11, 6; 24, 7. For more on the subject, see C. J. Simpson, *Agrippa's Rejection of a Triumph in 19 BC*, 'Liverpool Classical Monthly' 1991, 16.9, p. 137-138; F. V. Hickson, op. cit., p. 128-129.

³² D. Kienast, *Römische Kaisertabelle...*, p. 78.

³³ Vell. Pat. 2, 99; Cass. Dio 55, 9, 4; Suet. *Tib.* 9. For reasons I do not understand, B. Severy (op. cit., p. 163) dates Tiberius first receiving tribunician powers to 7 BC; she does not state her reasons for this chronology. Generally it is assumed the event took place in 6 BC instead. See e. g. D. Kienast, *Augustus...*, p. 108; J. W. Rich, op. cit., p. 228; M. H. Dettenhofer, op. cit., p. 169.

³⁴ D. Kienast, *Augustus...*, p. 108; J. W. Rich, op. cit., p. 228; B. Levick, *Tiberius the Politician*, London-New York 1999, p. 35-36; P. M. Swan, *The Augustan Succession: An Historical Commentary on Cassius Dio's Roman History Books 55-56 (9 B. C.-A. D. 14)*, Oxford 2004, p. 85.

governors. However, we must remember that our sources do not explicitly mention Tiberius being accorded such broad powers. From Cassius Dio we only learn that he was to go to Armenia, where after Tigranes' death the situation became unfavourable for Rome, but our author leaves his precise authority unspecified³⁵.

According to some scholars, conferring on Tiberius those powers meant that he gained the status of Augustus' co-ruler, thus replacing Agrippa³⁶, a point of view we can generally accept, with the reservation that we cannot be certain if Tiberius was then given an *imperium maius* as Agrippa had been before³⁷. Of course, the fact remains that in practice he was at that time the second most prominent person in the state (*civium post unum ... eminentissimus*), as Velleius Paterculus aptly put it³⁸.

It is, however, beyond any doubt that granting Tiberius tribunician power formally confirmed his rank as the second man in the Empire after Augustus³⁹. At this point we must ask ourselves whether bestowing this *tribunicia potestas* on him was tantamount to appointing him Augustus' heir. I do not believe we are in possession of the data required to answer that in the affirmative⁴⁰. In 6 BC Gaius Caesar was on the threshold of adulthood, only one year before donning his toga of manhood (the *toga virilis*), and was already making his first appearances on the public arena. Furthermore, two years prior he was officially presented to the legions stationed on the

³⁵ Cass. Dio 55, 9, 4. Suetonius (*Tib.* 11, 3), whose passage is invoked by, among others, Barbara Levick (*Tiberius...*, p. 238, note 24) only writes here that Tiberius made use of his *tribunicia potestas* during his stay on Rhodes, but says nothing of an *imperium maius*.

³⁶ See W. K. Lacey, *Summi fastigii vocabulum. The Story of a Title*, 'Journal of Roman Studies' 1979, 69, p. 31; D. Kienast, *Augustus...*, p. 108; P. M. Swan, op. cit., p. 85; B. Levick, *Augustus...*, p. 181.

³⁷ Perhaps in 6 BC they only prolonged the *imperium* he was given five years before for the Pannonian campaign. As we know it was an *imperium proconsulare*, but not *maius*. See P. Sawiński, op. cit., p. 30–31.

³⁸ Vell. Pat. 2, 99, 1.

³⁹ As aptly noted by Velleius Paterculus (2, 99).

⁴⁰ In that respect I agree with Adam Ziólkowski (*Historia Rzymu*, Poznań 2004, p. 401). *Contra* G. Bowersock, *Augustus and the East. The Problem of Succession*, [in:] *Caesar Augustus: Seven Aspects*, eds. F. Millar and E. Segal, Oxford 1984, p. 170.

Rhine, who received special *donativa* on the occasion⁴¹. The whole event was then commemorated with the issuing of *aurei* in the imperial mint in Lugdunum, on which Gaius was depicted as a son and heir to Augustus⁴². The younger brother, Lucius, was supposed to follow in his footsteps soon after. With that in mind, it seems unlikely for Augustus to decide to appoint Tiberius his successor exactly at the moment his sons, intended for that role from the beginning, entered manhood. It becomes all the more odd if we note that Augustus did not choose to take that step regarding Tiberius directly after Agrippa's death, when the two brothers were still children. Finally if conferring *tribunicia potestas* had involved designating Tiberius the heir, it is not very credible that he would have ostentatiously left Rome for Rhodes in a sulk; such behaviour would then have been absolutely irrational. Thus paradoxically it is in Tiberius' exaltation of 6 BC that I see the main reason for his departure⁴³. I am convinced he was aware his position as the second highest ranking person in the state was temporary and soon he would have to yield it to the young Caesars. So, leaving for Rhodes was probably a way for him to show displeasure with the growing importance of Gaius and Lucius whom Augustus had begun to publicly promote as his successors⁴⁴. That interpretation can be supported, among others, by a passage in Cassius Dio, where he quotes the opinion that Tiberius removed himself to Rhodes because he had not been designated as

⁴¹ Cass. Dio 55, 6, 4; M. Dettenhofer, *op. cit.*, p. 168.

⁴² The obverse of those coins shows Augustus' head and the legend runs, AUGUSTUS DIVI F. The reverse has Gaius mounted on a horse in gallop with legions' signs in the background, and the legend is C CAES AUGUS F. See *RIC*, I², *Aug.* 198–199.

⁴³ Which does not of course mean that we should definitely rule out other possible reasons listed in ancient literature. Those include especially Tiberius' wish to give way to Augustus' sons, who were then entering political life, discord between him and Julia, and weariness of political responsibilities. See Vell. Pat. 2, 99; Suet. *Tib.* 10, 1–2; Cass. Dio 55, 9, 5–8. On Tiberius' retirement to Rhodes, see especially P. Sattler, *op. cit.*, p. 509–514; B. Levick, *Tiberius' Retirement to Rhodes in 6 B. C.*, 'Latomus' 1972, 31, p. 779–813.

⁴⁴ That the two young *Caesares* enjoyed special status is borne out by, among other things, the many coin issues depicting them. Such coins were already made as early as 13 BC in the senatorial mint in Rome, the imperial mint in Lugdunum, and in the provinces. See e. g. *RIC*, I², *Aug.* 205–210, 404–405; *RPC*, I, 709, 775, 779, 2120.

Caesar⁴⁵. If we consider Dio's information reliable, we can put forward the idea that Tiberius had expected to be adopted by Augustus and thus gain the same rights to the 'throne' as Gaius and Lucius⁴⁶. Being granted *tribunicia potestas* no doubt could have inspired such hopes in him. Then when Augustus did not fulfil them, Tiberius' *dignitas* was gravely offended, in the end leading him to withdraw from political life.

The above analysis of Tiberius' career before his adoption in 4 BC, interrupted by his unexpected trip to Rhodes, makes the following conclusions possible. Despite the significant role played by Tiberius in the imperial family during the first two decades of Augustus' reign, he remained during that time in Marcellus' shadow, and after his death, in M. Agrippa's. That changed in 12 BC when, since his adopted sons were not of age, the princeps was forced to rely on Tiberius and Drusus, who replaced the dead Agrippa, mostly by taking over the majority of his military duties. Tiberius' standing within the *domus Augusta* was especially strengthened by his marriage to Julia and receiving tribunician power in 6 BC, although these are not sufficient grounds to suppose that by then he was already designated Augustus' successor; it is my view that until Gaius and Lucius died, Tiberius was merely an 'emergency' or 'stand-by' heir. It was only their death that finally opened the path for him to becoming the emperor.

⁴⁵ Cass. Dio 55, 9, 7. Cassius Dio means adoption here. One ought to note that his terminology here is typical of his own time, when *Caesar* had long been the official title meaning the designated heir, while in Augustus' time it was a cognomen used by all the male members of the *gens Iulia*. Cf. J. W. Rich, op. cit., p. 229.

⁴⁶ *Contra* Instinsky (op. cit., p. 326), who rejects the possibility, assuming the manoeuvre impossible, since Tiberius was Julia's husband. That, however, would have been an easy problem to solve, as Augustus could have had them divorced first.