

The Succession Plans of Augustus and Tiberius

By

Danielle M. Bryan

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Director of Thesis: F.E. Romer PhD

Major Department: History

This thesis examines the role of Tiberius in Augustus' succession plan. Tiberius was important because he became emperor after Augustus' death at Nola in AD 14. Augustus wanted a direct family heir, someone of Julian descent, to succeed him. In order to achieve and ensure this goal would be carried out even in the event of his death he created a succession plan that had to be revised several times throughout his life because of unfortunate deaths. Augustus did not consider the fact that Tiberius had dynastic concerns of his own. As Augustus' succession plan evolved it included and affected Tiberius' own dynastic concerns.

The Succession Plans of Augustus and Tiberius

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Danielle M. Bryan

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Danielle M. Bryan

Approved By:

Director of Thesis: _____

F. E. Romer Ph.D.

Committee Member: _____

Anthony Papalas Ph.D.

Committee Member: _____

Jonathan Reid Ph.D.

Committee Member: _____

John Stevens Ph.D.

Chair of the Department of History _____

Gerald Prokopowicz Ph.D

Dean of the Graduate School _____

Paul J. Gemperline PhD

Table of Contents

List of Figures	v
Introduction	1
Chapter 1: Source Criticism	3
Chapter 2: Illusion of a Republic	9
Chapter 3: Tiberius' Self Exile	42
Chapter 4: Failed Succession Plan	60
Conclusion	80
Works Cited A	87
Works Cited B	88

List of Figures

1. Augustus' Three Tier Succession Plan In 18 BC	81
2. Augustus' Three Tier Succession Plan After 11 BC	82
3. Augustus' Three Tier Succession Plan In 2 BC	83
4. Augustus' Three Tier Succession Plan In AD 4	84
5. Tiberius' Three Tier Succession Plan In AD 14	85
6. Tiberius' Three Tier Succession Plan In AD 21	86

Introduction

This thesis will discuss the succession plan of Augustus and Tiberius' role in it. Augustus wanted a direct family heir to take the throne after his death, but many times the designated successor was too young to govern the empire. Thus, the role of vice-emperor (second in command), or regent, was created. Two elements that are crucial to the succession plan are the *imperium* and tribunician power. In 23 BC Augustus decided that both of these powers were necessary for him to rule as princeps. The *imperium* was only able to be used outside the city of Rome. The tribunician power was formally able to be used inside the city of Rome and up until the first milestone beyond the pomerium. If an individual possessed both the *imperium* and the tribunician power he would have the power to make executive and military decisions. The second in command had both the *imperium* and the tribunician power. This would enable the vice-emperor to act as regent and to make executive decisions if Augustus died before the designated successor was old enough to take the throne. It should be noted that Augustus counted his own tribunician power by annual increments, but the vice-emperor's was granted for five-year periods without enumeration. Tiberius is referred to as the regent, or vice-emperor, throughout this thesis because he is Augustus' second in command as well as a potential regent, and mentor, to the designated successor. After Augustus died in 14 AD, Tiberius acted like Augustus and created a succession plan that would allow for his own direct family line, not Augustus', to succeed to the role of princeps. The succession plan of Augustus has been a topic of research before, but Tiberius' role in it and Tiberius' own developing dynastic concerns have rarely, if ever, been considered in the context of Augustus' planning for the succession. This study

examines how the development and changing forms of Augustus' succession plan over time both included and affected Tiberius.

Chapter 1: Source Criticism

This thesis seeks to elucidate the transition from the old republic to Augustus' new principate. It focuses on the succession of Tiberius and the role that he played earlier in the Augustan transition and succession plan. It draws on five literary sources that have survived about the principates of Augustus and Tiberius. Augustus' own *Res Gestae*, Velleius Paterculus's *Roman History*, Tacitus's *Annals*, Suetonius' biographies of Augustus and Tiberius, and Cassius Dio's *Roman History*. Dio wrote in Greek, and the others in Latin (except that a Greek translation was added to the Latin text of the *Res Gestae*). Each source approaches the material from a different angle, but some similarities in the sources suggest that the later authors were using at least to some extent the older ones known to us.

The *Res Gestae* was kept by the Vestal Virgins while Augustus was alive, and it is supposed to have been completed right before the death of Augustus although the work had been revised several times during Augustus' lifetime.¹ The value of this work lies in the fact that it contains the actual words of Augustus, though they must be taken lightly. The work detailed the honors that Augustus had received by the people, his military and other achievements, information about the advancement of his adopted sons.² The *Res Gestae* were inscribed on the walls of his temple at Ancyra, which is where our text comes from, although the text was put up at the entrance to his

¹ Purcell (1998) in ed. Hornblower and Spawforth. Oxford Reference Online; Cooley (2009) 43.

² Ibid; Westerman (1911) 1. 6; Augustus wished to justify his power Cooley (2009) 39.

mausoleum on the Campus Martius (Suet., *Aug.* 101.) and at other places around the empire.³

Velleius Paterculus' *The Roman History* was a pro-Tiberian narrative. But it was common during the imperial times for historians to be favorable to the emperor.⁴

Tiberius was Velleius's former commander, which explains why Velleius' work comes across as so pro-Tiberian. Velleius is important for this thesis because he describes Tiberius' abilities as a leader and general in great and credibility. Velleius travelled extensively with the army and was a senator like Tacitus. He witnessed and participated in many of the events that he described.⁵

Tacitus wrote three-quarters of a century after the death of Tiberius. He was concerned with the autocracy that had replaced the old republican form of government. None of his identifiable sources have survived but the similarities between his writing and Suetonius's and Dio's suggest a common source. Tacitus used innuendo in his writing and was always looking for the darker aspects of the nature of Tiberius.⁶ While Tacitus was young he could still have interacted with individuals or families that had been victims of Tiberius. He also could draw on the memories of individuals who were living at the time that the *Annals* were written approximately 116 AD.⁷ As a senator Tacitus interacted with the noble Romans and their households. This availability set

³ Cooley (2009) 35.

⁴ Woodman (2000) in ed. Hornblower and Spawforth. Oxford Reference Online.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ "Tacitus" (2007) in ed. Roberts, Oxford Reference Online.

⁷ Marsh (1959) 3.

Tacitus apart from other writers of the time and helps to explain how and why the influence from these family traditions made him different from other writers.⁸

Suetonius, writing in the early second century A.D., was an imperial biographer, and his focus was thematic not chronological. Suetonius often includes more sensational aspects in his biographies, but his research cannot be overlooked. As an imperial secretary under Hadrian, he had access to the letters of Augustus, and to public records which he cites in *Tib.* 21. His use of public records was evident by the detailed information that he provided about the birthplaces of Tiberius and Caligula (*Tib.* 5, *Calig.*, 8).⁹ He also cited personal documents of the emperors, often verbatim.¹⁰ He quoted Julius Caesar's will (*Jul.* 83) and Tiberius' autobiography and will (*Tib.* 61, 76.) He also referred to Claudius' memoirs (*Claud.* 41), and Marc Antony's letters (*Aug.* 7, 16, 69). This kind of information shows that Suetonius was doing legitimate research, and not just including gossip and rumor in his writing.

Cassius Dio's actual sources are virtually unknown, but he has a good and detailed account for most of the Augustan period. Research has suggested that he knew the works of Suetonius, and Tacitus, as well as Augustus' autobiography, which has not survived.¹¹ Dio's reliability cannot be measured simply by knowing his sources. He was probably influenced by Thucydides which may explain both his chronological

⁸ Marsh (1959) 3.

⁹ Graves (1957) xxiv.

¹⁰ Bradley(2000) in ed. Hornblower and Spawforth, Oxford Reference Online.

¹¹ Kilvert (1987) 21.

structure (although annalistic treatments had a long life in Roman historiography) and his desire to uncover motives by observing men's actions. His Augustan books have remained virtually intact (though we are dependent on later epitomes for a few years), and were his original creation. He has left us with the ideas of a senior statesman (Dio was consul in 229 AD) on the transitional Augustan principate.¹² There is not a lot of evidence to suggest that Cassius Dio was preoccupied with rumor or gossip, and the influence of Thucydides vouches for this. Also Dio was a politician and had the political background to comment on and understand the political situation of his own time, which strengthens his ability to understand the past and comment on the events that had shaped the principate and led to the current political atmosphere that he lived in. More evidence of originality of his work lies in the fact that Cassius Dio provides an analysis on the problems that faced Augustus and the imperial system.¹³ Since Dio lived two centuries after the Augustan principate he would have dealt with the long term effects of the new governmental system.¹⁴ Thus, Dio offers a concise evaluation of the impact that the Augustan principate had on Rome.

The parallels that exist between Dio and Tacitus and Suetonius reveal that Dio probably had direct access to them.¹⁵ Other works like those of Josephus, Plutarch, and Pliny the Elder were available to Dio. It is likely that Dio also referenced the

¹² Ibid., 22.

¹³ Ibid., 23.

¹⁴ Rich (2000) in ed. Hornblower and Spawforth. Oxford Reference Online.

¹⁵ Edmondson (1992) 30; For information on Tacitus and Dio see Syme (1983) 3-23; for information on Suetonius and Dio see Townend (1960) 98-120.

autobiographies of Tiberius and Claudius, like Suetonius (Suet. *Tib.* 61.1; *Cl.* 41.3).¹⁶

There were also the works of Agrippina the younger, which Tacitus and Pliny the Elder refer to (Tac. *Annals* 4.53; Plin. *NH* 7.8.46), and there was a wealth of other

information available on the Julio-Claudian era for Dio to use.¹⁷ He was careful not to rely on the sensational information/material in some of the works available to him.¹⁸ But because Dio's work in the Augustan books appears to be original and non-sensational he appears to have been picking and choosing his sources carefully in order to create an accurate and convincing narrative.

In sum, Tacitus takes a strong negative stance on Tiberius, and Velleius a strong positive one. Both of the authors are biased, but their biases prevent us from seeing Tiberius in one way only. Tacitus is drawing from unknown sources, possibly the testimonies of the noble families that were directly affected by Tiberius' regime. Velleius gives us a contemporary insight into Tiberius' strengths as a leader and as a general. Of all the sources Dio wrote the latest, but he drew from various sources and he experienced the long term effects of the Augustan' principate. Suetonius was a biographer and his writings provide us with insight into the personal lives of the emperors. There are likely certain details that a biographer would notice before a historian because the two genres, history and biography, each demanded something different of their authors. The actual words of Augustus in the *Res Gestae* also provides

¹⁶ Edmondson (1992) 31.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 32.

insight into Augustus' thoughts. The careful construction and editing that has been done to it is written proof of the emperor's main concerns.

As for the secondary sources the scholarship has focused more on Augustus' new regime and the succession plan was certainly a part of it, but Tiberius' role in the succession plan has not been treated as a subject by itself. The succession of Tiberius has been discussed by the biographers Seager, Levick, and Shotter. They give us more insight on Tiberius' life, but they tend only to focus on the fact that Tiberius was a part of Augustus' succession plan. What has not been looked at in detail is the evolution of Augustus' succession plan and how it affected Tiberius. Tiberius' involvement not only influenced, but also helped develop and shape his own succession plan.

Chapter 2: Illusion of a Republic

The reason Gaius Caligula became the third emperor of the Roman Empire was Augustus' failed succession plan. After Augustus established himself as emperor of Rome he began to look for an heir to ensure peace and prosperity after his death. During his principate Augustus designed a succession plan, but it failed because of untimely deaths and political circumstances. This thesis emphasizes and examines Tiberius' role in the succession because he was, in fact, the individual who succeeded Augustus and who thus had dynastic concerns of his own.

Tiberius was the son of Augustus' second wife Livia. His education, civil and military career were a testament to his abilities, and would have been an asset to the people of Rome if he had been chosen as Augustus' successor from the beginning. But Augustus had other considerations and concerns in the 20's BC. When Augustus finally selected Tiberius as his heir, there was a catch. When Augustus adopted Tiberius as his son he also adopted his third grandson, Agrippa Postumus, who was a direct descendant of Augustus. Previously Postumus had been exiled by Augustus because he did not possess the correct temperament to act as emperor. Upon Tiberius' adoption Augustus had Tiberius adopt his nephew Germanicus, who was engaged to Augustus' granddaughter Agrippina. The engagement was arranged by Augustus to ensure that his succession would be continued through his granddaughter's children with

Germanicus.¹⁹ This thesis will discuss the dangers of monarchical succession plan, and how Tiberius' life experience led him to make the same dynastic mistake as Augustus by selecting his son Drusus as his successor.

In 42 BC Tiberius Claudius Nero was born to the elder Tiberius Claudius Nero and Livia Drusilla. The family was descended from the two main branches of the Claudian family, Nero and Pulcher.²⁰ Tiberius' father was a political rival to Octavian. After the assassination of Julius Caesar in 44 BC the elder Tiberius Nero supported the assassins, and moved to align himself with Marc Antony's brother, Lucius. Following Lucius' fall the elder Nero fled to Sicily to Sextus Pompey, and finally to Marc Antony.²¹ During his flight he was also accompanied by his wife and their small child, Tiberius. The small family probably did not return to Rome until the Treaty of Misenum in 39 BC.

It was at this time that Livia Drusilla, the wife of Tiberius Nero, caught the eye of Octavian, who would later be granted the title of Augustus. Octavian was enamored with Livia's beauty, and he desired to make her his wife. The elder Tiberius Nero surrendered Livia to Octavian without a fight.²² It is probable that the elder Tiberius Nero had a political motive in mind when he relinquished her. Octavian's marriage to his first wife Scribonia had been a political alliance. At the time Augustus had wished to become closer to Pompey's son, Sextus Pompey, because Sextus had control of the

¹⁹ Shotter (2000) 343.

²⁰ Suet., *Tib* 3.

²¹ Suet. *Tib*. 4.2; Dio 48.15.3; Vell. 2.75.3.

²² Syme (1974) 483.

fleets that ruled the seas around Italy and therefore control of the Sicilian grain supply to Rome. Octavian was concerned about his own sea power so he married the sister of Sextus.²³ The divorce of Scribonia would potentially weaken Octavian's alliance with Sextus Pompey, and it is probable that the elder Tiberius Nero felt that this divorce would strengthen Antony's camp. It is likely that Livia was pursued by Octavian. Octavian exuded power and it had an effect like an aphrodisiac.²⁴ Livia was taken by Octavian even though she was pregnant with the second child of the elder Tiberius Nero.²⁵ To judge by the record their marriage was a love match even if there were disagreements and complications along the way.

In 38 BC Livia married Octavian when Tiberius was only three years old.²⁶ Livia gave birth to her second child, who was called Drusus, in the house of Octavian. There were rumors about the paternity of Drusus. Some said that Drusus was the son of Octavian, but this is unlikely because Livia must have conceived the child before the Treaty of Misenum, and she would not have come in contact with Octavian before that time.²⁷ To discourage the rumor Octavian sent the newborn Drusus to live with his real father, the elder Tiberius Claudius Nero, and his brother Tiberius.²⁸

²³ Barrett (2002) 19.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Suet. *Aug.* 62.2, *Tib.* 4.3; Dio 48.44; Vell. 2.79.2; Tac. 5.1.

²⁶ Vell. 2.94.1.

²⁷ Barrett (2002) 27.

²⁸ Dio 48.44.5.

The paternity of the child is not the important issue, but the fact that Octavian allowed the boys to live with their natural father speaks volumes. It is probable that Octavian was hoping for his own son with Livia. She had already proven that she was fertile, and Octavian only had a daughter at this point, Julia his daughter with Scribonia. It is more than likely that Octavian wished to have a child with the woman whom he was so madly in love with. Otherwise Octavian could have adopted his two stepsons after the death of their natural father in 33 BC.²⁹ But Octavian did not do this. In fact he never adopted Drusus, and he did not adopt Tiberius until much later when his explicit succession plan is running out in 4 AD.³⁰ He did bring the boys into his home after their father's death, because the elder Tiberius Nero had left the two boys in Octavian's care in his will.³¹ It is probable that Octavian would have done this anyway because of their mother, but it is clear that Octavian did not desire to adopt these boys or he would have.

In 31 BC the Battle of Actium solidified Octavian's position as the emerging new ruler. The civil wars had torn Rome apart, and Octavian defeated Marc Antony and was the most powerful man in the Roman world. When Octavian returned to Rome in 29 BC he celebrated his triumph over Cleopatra. He included his step-son Tiberius and his nephew Marcellus, the son of his sister Octavia. Tiberius was allowed to ride on the left-hand trace horse, but Marcellus rode on the right-side. The right side was designated as

²⁹ Suet. *Tib.* 6.4.

³⁰ Suet. *Aug* 65.1; *Tib.* 15.2; Dio 55.13.2; Vell. 2.103.2

³¹ Barrett (2002) 27.

a greater position of honor.³² Even this early Octavian was showing preference to his nephew Marcellus, possibly even thinking of him as a potential successor. One of the first things Octavian did after the Battle of Actium in 31 BC was begin the construction on his family mausoleum. This suggests that Octavian was already thinking about establishing a hereditary monarchy as early as 28 BC. Octavian was essentially the head of the Julian faction, which he was promoting and would continue to promote.³³ It had been his goal from the beginning, starting with his vengeance for the murder of his uncle and adoptive father, Julius Caesar.

Octavian knew what kind of power he was trying to attain. He also was determined to make sure that no one else would be able to copy what he did.³⁴ Octavian would become Princeps and would continue to dwell in the city of Rome as a consul. This would block the old nobility from promotion, because nothing would occur without his scrutiny and approval, and his power was still growing. The Senate gave Octavian the title of Augustus in January 27 BC.³⁵ The Senate offered Augustus the dictatorship, but he declined it.³⁶ He resigned the consulship and became a proconsul with a vast province.³⁷ Augustus wanted it to appear as if he was giving the power back

³² Suet. *Tib* 6.4; Dio. 51.21.5.

³³ Shotter (1992) 17.

³⁴ Seager (2005) 8; Levick (1999) 21.

³⁵ *RG* 1.6.

³⁶ *RG* 1.5.

³⁷ Seager (2005) 8.

to the Senate which explains why he declined the dictatorship.³⁸In 23 BC Augustus' *imperium* was considered greater than the governors of the provinces.³⁹ *Imperium* gave Augustus the power to command the armies. Augustus also asked for and was given the tribunician power in 23 BC. Tribunician power gave the wielder the right to convene the plebeian council, propose legislation; the person was also sacrosanct and possessed the power of veto. Only a plebeian could hold this office, and Augustus was a patrician. Ultimately he was offered all the powers of the tribunate without holding the actual office, and Augustus was granted the tribunician power for life. The *imperium* power could only be used outside of the city, but the tribunician power could be used inside the city up to the first milestone. Augustus now possessed both the *imperium* and the tribunician power. His power was secured everywhere he went.

In 27 BC Tiberius took the toga of manhood, and he also participated in his first military campaign. He accompanied Augustus on the Cantabrian campaign.⁴⁰ The people of northern Spain were resisting the rule of Rome, and Augustus went to lead the forces in person.⁴¹ He took Tiberius and Marcellus with him. It is significant that Augustus was including both his nephew and his step-son in military campaigns, just as it was significant that they both rode trace horses in the triumph of 29, even if Marcellus was shown greater preference at the time. Augustus was beginning to construct a

³⁸ RG 1.5; Vell. 2.89.5.

³⁹ Seager (2005) 9.

⁴⁰ Suet. *Tib.* 9.1; Dio 53.26.

⁴¹ Seager (2005) 12.

succession plan from his family and Tiberius and Marcellus would occupy two different roles in it.

When Augustus returned to Rome in 24 BC both Tiberius and Marcellus received the general honors that accompanied a successful campaign. It might seem that both Marcellus and Tiberius were being treated equally, but Augustus already had plan to advance Marcellus with an arranged marriage between Marcellus and Julia. Julia was Augustus' daughter by his first wife Scribonia, and she was his only natural child. She would be useful in any political marriage and especially in Augustus' succession plan.⁴² A marriage to her would solidify Marcellus' position as the intended heir who would continue to be trained by Augustus, and eventually take his place. Marcellus was the son of Octavia, Augustus' sister, and already connected to the house of Augustus. A union between Julia and Marcellus could provide Augustus with a grandson who would become his eventual successor.⁴³ A marriage between his daughter and nephew would have satisfied the family issue. But the advancement of Marcellus implied that Augustus might want his own second in command as well as an heir within his family.

Marcellus was favored over Tiberius in other ways as well. When they returned to Rome Marcellus was given the right to sit as a senator amongst the ex-praetors, and he was allowed to stand for consul ten years before the necessary age. Tiberius was only allowed to stand for each office of the *cursus honorum* five years before the normal

⁴² Syme (2002) 378.

⁴³ Levick (1999) 20.

age.⁴⁴ Both Tiberius and Marcellus were promoted but again Marcellus was made an aedile and Tiberius was made only a quaestor.⁴⁵ The preference that was given to Marcellus was apparent because the aedileship being a higher office in the *cursus honorum*, was like the right-hand trace horse in 29 BC, a mark of greater preference.

The fact that Augustus was already planning on securing an heir was a sign that he had no intentions of relinquishing power from the 20's BC on. It is true that there was no precedent for the transmission of power that Augustus now held, because his position was not a traditional one.⁴⁶ This could have been seen as a problem but it was an advantage for Augustus. Since there was no previous position like this, and no previous laws in place that could regulate his position.⁴⁷ Augustus would be able to dictate how the power he possessed would be transmitted. Augustus already held supreme power, but what would happen when he died? He needed a way to ensure that the principate that he created would continue on after his death. The best way to guarantee the continued existence of the principate would be to select an heir who would follow his wishes. Augustus wanted the powerful position of princeps to be passed to a family member, and possibly a direct descendant.

Augustus was already showing favoritism to his nephew Marcellus by his public appearances, and marrying him to his daughter Julia. But fate had other plans. In 23

⁴⁴ Dio 53.28.

⁴⁵ Dio 53.28.

⁴⁶ Seager (2005)14.

⁴⁷ Levick (1999) 21.

Augustus fell ill and the people were afraid that he might not recover. There were many who thought that Marcellus would be named heir, but Augustus did not name a successor at all.⁴⁸ Instead Augustus gave a detailed report of the military and the state to the consul Calpurnius Piso and passed his signet ring to Marcus Agrippa.⁴⁹

Agrippa certainly had more experience than Marcellus at this point in time, and Augustus owed a tremendous amount to him because of his military expertise. Augustus' military success was due to Agrippa's military skill. Augustus owed Agrippa a certain amount of loyalty, and if Augustus were to select an heir from his bloodline this could cause a rift in power.⁵⁰ It is likely that Augustus did not think that the nineteen year old Marcellus was ready to take over and he was afraid to leave the fragile new government in such inexperienced hands. However, Augustus recovered from his illness. If Augustus had intended for Agrippa to take over in 23 BC it was only during an emergency. Once Augustus' health returned and he was no longer in danger he returned to his succession plan featuring Marcellus. But eventually Augustus would have to rethink his succession plan because Marcellus would soon become ill and he would not survive.

In 23 BC when Augustus had fully recovered he learned that Marcellus was unhappy about Agrippa receiving Augustus' signet ring, and thereby being marked as his successor in this crisis. Instead of consoling Marcellus and drawing attention to

⁴⁸ Dio 53.30.

⁴⁹ Dio 53.30.

⁵⁰ Seager (2005)16.

Agrippa's vast experience, Augustus sent Agrippa to Syria. According to Dio, Augustus did this to prevent any hostility between the two.⁵¹ The fact that Augustus sent Agrippa to Syria and kept Marcellus in Rome suggests that Augustus wanted to make sure that Agrippa stayed in the role of military advisor. The Syrian front was a legitimate military concern for Rome, and Augustus suddenly sending Agrippa would likely make Agrippa's *imperium* equal with that of Augustus in the provinces, because Agrippa would be a legate of the princeps.⁵² It was an assignment that would bring honor to Agrippa, but it was also convenient for Augustus' because Agrippa would be away from Marcellus and this would prevent hostility between the two. The appointment also kept Agrippa in the position of aide to Augustus, and Marcellus as an intended heir. Now that Augustus had his health back he took another step to make sure his meaning was understood. Augustus went to the Senate with his will and desired to read it aloud as proof that he did not claim a successor in it.⁵³

Since Augustus did not explain his actions publicly everyone had to assume what his intentions were, and his recovery meant that he could continue with his original plan. The ambivalent nature would prevent Augustus from looking like he had an agenda. It would also prevent him from committing himself to a sudden decision in a time of crisis. Reading his will in the Senate would dissolve any rumors or questions about what his

⁵¹ Dio 53.32.

⁵² Seager (2005) 16.

⁵³ Dio 53.31.

actions really meant. Agrippa was not a young man like Marcellus, but he had supported Augustus since boyhood.⁵⁴

According to Velleius, Agrippa withdrew from Rome in a kind of self-exile because of the situation with Marcellus.⁵⁵ According to Suetonius, Agrippa felt like Augustus was not treating him as sincerely as he had before his illness.⁵⁶ It is probable that the tension between Marcellus and Agrippa did not go unnoticed. At the risk of causing animosity between Agrippa and Marcellus Augustus sends the former on an official mission in Syria.⁵⁷ But Agrippa did not continue on to Syria, instead he stopped at Mytilene and sent his lieutenants on ahead of him.⁵⁸ This behavior was probably indicative of personal resentment, and his withdrawal from public service anticipates Tiberius's withdrawal to Rhodes in 6 BC. Agrippa and Marcellus could not occupy the same position, but Augustus' ultimate succession plan had not been revealed. Establishing an heir from his direct family line reflects his desire to establish what would effectively be a hereditary monarchy.

In 23 BC Agrippa was the only man who could seriously compete for the imperial throne. He was responsible for a large part of Augustus' success, and was well respected and loved by the people.⁵⁹ In 23 BC the young Marcellus, Augustus' intended

⁵⁴ Suet. *Aug.* 66.

⁵⁵ Vell. 2.93.2.

⁵⁶ Suet. 66.3.

⁵⁷ Vell. 2.93.2.

⁵⁸ Dio 53.32.

⁵⁹ Dio 53.31.4.

heir, became ill and died.⁶⁰ He had only been married to Julia for a year, and the marriage did not produce any offspring. Agrippa's role in Augustus' succession plan now changed.

Augustus had to restructure his plan for succession. But this time he did not have an immediate candidate that would take Marcellus' place. His nephew had been the only male in his immediate family who would qualify as a direct descendant, and Tiberius was still on the fringes of Augustus' planning. Augustus was left with using his only daughter Julia as a means to obtain a direct heir. But Agrippa was still alive and his previous behavior indicates how he felt about a place in Augustus' succession plan. If Agrippa had not felt slighted by Augustus' favoritism towards Marcellus then he might have been content with his current position as aide to Augustus. But his sudden withdrawal to Mytilene, was a sign that there was unresolved tension. Now that Marcellus was dead Augustus did not return to his former for succession, even though his actions after his recovery suggest that this is exactly what he wanted to do.

Marcellus was gone, but Agrippa remained. Agrippa was qualified, but he was not connected to Augustus' family. It is interesting to note that Augustus could have made use of his stepson Tiberius at this point. Tiberius was already following the *cursus honorum*, and he had begun his training and public life alongside Marcellus. Augustus could have adopted Tiberius and that would have solved the direct family connection.

⁶⁰ Tac. *Ann.*1.3.; Suet. *Aug* 63.1; Vell.2.93.2.

But Tiberius also was of Claudian descent, and if Augustus was to bring him into his succession plan it would have to be to marry Julia. But Augustus passed over Tiberius and promoted instead Agrippa, the man Augustus had kept out of his dynastic plan except in the crisis of 23 BC. Agrippa was an outsider and embarrassed by his humble origins, but he also was a close, loyal aide to Augustus. As stepson Tiberius was a part of Augustus' immediate family. But Augustus had no intention of leaving the succession question unanswered, or of someone as powerful as Agrippa as a free agent. Augustus' second try at the succession plan would indeed be a design of genius.⁶¹ Augustus' had truly become a master politician.⁶²

Agrippa was technically a part of Augustus' family because in 28 BC he was married to the niece of Augustus, Marcella, who was also the sister of Marcellus and the daughter of Octavia. But this connection did not seem to satisfy Augustus, whose close friend Maecenas reminded Augustus of the power and prestige that he had allowed Agrippa to achieve. According to Dio, Maecenas told Augustus that he had made Agrippa so powerful that Augustus must now either make Agrippa his son-in-law or have him killed.⁶³

Augustus could have structured his succession plan around his niece Marcella and Agrippa, but neither Agrippa nor Octavia, Marcella's mother, was a Julian. In this new succession plan Augustus' wishes were evident. He had Agrippa divorce Marcella,

⁶¹ Levick (1999) 24.

⁶² Seager (2005) 17.

⁶³ Dio 54.6.4.

and marry his daughter Julia in 21 BC.⁶⁴ So being married to his niece was not good enough because the Julian connection was completely absent. If Augustus had married Julia to another man and had produced a male child, and if Augustus did not survive long enough to see the boy come of age, then the child would be a target of anyone powerful enough take the throne, someone like Agrippa.⁶⁵ Instead of leaving a loose end Augustus devised a new plan. The marriage of Agrippa to Julia would likely produce offspring, who would be the grandchildren of Augustus and the children of Agrippa. It was a guarantee that Agrippa would put one of his children on the throne after him, and the child would also be a descendant of Augustus. This neutralized the potential threat that Agrippa represented and was insurance for Augustus.

This marriage also created a new role in Augustus' succession plan. Ultimately Augustus wanted a Julian heir from his family, but a man like Agrippa was a potential threat if Augustus selected a younger man for his successor. At the same time the empire could not be managed by someone who had little experience. Augustus needed someone to help guide the chosen successor until he was able to manage things on his own. Augustus knew that it was likely that Agrippa would act as a guardian to the throne if it was his child that was in the succession. Augustus created the role of a vice-emperor who, as regent, would safeguard the throne for the intended heir.⁶⁶ The

⁶⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 1.3; Suet *Aug* 63.1; Dio 54.6.

⁶⁵ Seager (2005) 17; Levick (1999) 24.

⁶⁶ Seager (2005) 18.

marriage of Agrippa and Julia would also bind Agrippa even closer to his father-in-law Augustus. Julia would successfully discharge her function in the dynastic scheme.⁶⁷

Augustus had no intention of making Agrippa the direct heir to his position as princeps. If Agrippa were to rule it would only be for a limited amount of time. Agrippa would act as nothing more than a regent for the heir Augustus wanted. There was one problem with this plan though. Agrippa was the same age as Augustus but his health was better than Augustus'. The concept of having a regent emperor would work in Agrippa's situation because he was an older man, and he would be guarding the throne for his offspring. What would happen if a younger man had to become a regent emperor? Or what if the younger man had offspring of his own? This was a potential problem that Augustus was not concerned with because the marriage between Julia and Agrippa proved to be a fertile one.⁶⁸

Julia and Agrippa had five children, Gaius, Lucius, Agrippa, Julia, and Agrippina.⁶⁹ Augustus essentially made Agrippa a vice-emperor. Augustus still fully intended to have a direct Julian heir on the throne. Agrippa was only a substitute and a potential hazard. The evidence for this was the fact that as soon as Julia produced two sons Augustus adopted them as his own sons.⁷⁰ Why was it necessary to adopt his grandchildren? It is evidence that Augustus wanted a direct descendent to succeed him.

⁶⁷ Mellor (2010) 119.

⁶⁸ Levick (1999) 37.

⁶⁹ Suet. *Aug.* 64.

⁷⁰ Suet. *Aug.* 64.

Agrippa was merely an obstacle that Augustus had to devise a plan to appease, but not get in the way of his ultimate plan. Augustus saw Agrippa as a temporary guardian only, even though Agrippa was qualified. The evidence for Agrippa's qualification lies in the fact that Augustus, in a moment of severe ill health, passed his signet ring to Agrippa in 23 BC. Marcellus was only somewhat qualified, and without Augustus taking him under his wing it is likely that he would not have risen in the political and social ranks. Also his premature death prevents us from seeing what his true potential might have been. But it does not negate the fact that Marcellus was able to meet Augustus' main requirement, direct descent in the Julian family.

Augustus was fortunate because Julia gave birth to not one boy but two who were close in age. Gaius was born in 20 BC and Lucius in 17 BC.⁷¹ Augustus adopted both grandsons and they became Gaius and Lucius Caesar.⁷² Augustus now had not one but two heirs that satisfied his requirement. The tragic death of Marcellus might have given Augustus the idea to adopt both the boys. That way if one of them were to die the other would still be able to continue on in his brothers' place.⁷³ Also if Augustus were to die before Gaius was able to govern the empire without guidance then Agrippa would be there to guide him, but not take his place.

Agrippa's power would remain limited unless something happened to Augustus.

This is exactly what Augustus had wanted. He had to make use of Agrippa because of

⁷¹ Suet. *Aug* 64; Dio 54.8.5.

⁷² Levick (1999) 29.

⁷³ Fantham (2006) 92.

the potential threat that he presented to Augustus' dynastic plan, and this was the best solution. It also allowed Augustus to prevent any gaps in power if tragedy were to strike again. The transmission of power was an important issue to Augustus as evidenced in his succession plan. Transmission of power was the crucial aspect of the succession problem. Augustus was trying to find a way to guarantee the conveyance of power after his death. Danger came when there was a gap in succession.⁷⁴ A gap would allow for a military coup or a drawn out power struggle. If there were two men with identical power and something happened to one of them the other would be ready to take his place and there would not be any question to his authority.⁷⁵ The succession plan had now taken on a particular shape that would ease Augustus' paranoia about his wishes being followed in the event he died. The dynastic plan came in three tiers as follows: Augustus and Agrippa on the first tier, Gaius and Lucius on the second and Tiberius and Drusus on the third.⁷⁶

It is important to remember that Agrippa's role was only active if something were to happen to Augustus before Gaius was able to govern on his own. Also Augustus and Agrippa are on the first tier and they are the oldest so by default the closest to death, and thus the focus of the succession is on the second tier, Gaius and Lucius. The third tier I have included because even though Augustus did not at the moment want to include them they are there waiting in the wings and could be of use to him. Thus they

⁷⁴ Levick (1999) 29.

⁷⁵ Levick (1999) 29.

⁷⁶ Figure 1.

are still available though not marked out in a particular way. Their importance lies in the fact that Augustus still continues to make use of Tiberius and Drusus as *viri militares*. They become a key element in many of the coming campaigns. Even though they are the Claudian stepsons Augustus could still potentially use them, and it is likely that he himself even considered this. Since Augustus put both Tiberius and Drusus in equal command positions once they came of age.⁷⁷ This was the restructured dynastic plan after the death of Marcellus. Augustus was making every effort to prevent history from repeating itself.

In 18 BC Augustus shared with Agrippa the tribunician power.⁷⁸ The tribunician power was a powerful tool created by Augustus and used to designate his second in command.⁷⁹ As soon as Augustus gave Agrippa the tribunician power he sent him to the East and this is where Agrippa remained until 13 BC.⁸⁰ It is probable that Augustus wanted to keep Agrippa out of Rome because Agrippa was needed at Rome only in the event that Augustus died. The position of the regent emperor was the second slot on the first tier of Augustus' succession bracket. It is probable that the position of regent was also denoted by the giving of tribunician power. In the event that something did happen to Augustus there would need to be someone who was able to make decisions, if the designated heir was not old enough or experienced enough. The tribunician power

⁷⁷ Fantham (2006) 92.

⁷⁸ Dio 54.28; Levick (1999) 24.

⁷⁹ Syme (2002) 335.

⁸⁰ Dio 54.10.4.

would ensure that the imperial regent's decisions would be accepted. But the person holding that kind of power was considered to be Augustus' second in command, and until Agrippa was needed as regent in the succession plan Augustus likely was content to keep the holder of tribunician power out of Rome.

Meanwhile in 16 BC Augustus had begun the campaign on Rome's northern frontier. His ultimate goal was to extend Rome's empire to the natural boundaries of the Rhine and Danube rivers in Germany.⁸¹ Augustus took his stepson Tiberius with him, and again we see Augustus making use of Tiberius as an aide.⁸² Tiberius was still following the *cursus honorum* at the normal pace, other than being allowed to serve each office five years ahead of the minimum age. In 15 BC Tiberius and Drusus set out to campaign against the Rhaeti and Vindelici.⁸³ The situation with Tiberius and Drusus shows Augustus' fondness for using pairs of brothers. Even though Augustus did not intend for the two stepsons to become heirs he was still using them in the same capacity that he was using Agrippa. It does show that both Tiberius and Drusus were capable young men on the battlefield.⁸⁴ The northern frontier had become increasingly dangerous and it was with Drusus and Tiberius, the Claudian stepsons, that Augustus would adopt an aggressive foreign policy in the north. The brothers proved that they could work well together. The Rhaetians, who lived near the Tridentine Alps, were raiding parts of Gaul and even coming into Italy. Augustus sent Drusus first and he was

⁸¹ Seager (2005) 18.

⁸² Dio 54.19.6.

⁸³ Suet. *Tib.* 9.1; Dio 54.22; Vell. 2.95.2.

⁸⁴ Vell.2.95 with n. 306 on p. 112 of the translation.

able to stop them from coming into Italy. However, the Rhaetians continued to attack Gaul and as a result Augustus sent Tiberius. The two brothers became aggressive and attacked the rebels from many different points. The rebels became terrified because they were attacked from multiple fronts.⁸⁵ As a result the brothers were successful and they eliminated the rebel forces. Drusus and Tiberius were able to subdue the Raetians, Vindelici, Breuci and Dalmatae who were the tribes that were responsible for all the unrest. This use of the brothers of course was an asset to Augustus, because he could put his family members in leadership positions.

In 13 BC Agrippa was sent to Pannonia because they were thirsty for war, but when they heard that Agrippa was coming they abandoned their cause. Agrippa had left for the campaign even though it was already winter.⁸⁶ He had been kept busy since 18 BC when he was given tribunician power, and his age and the harsh elements caused Agrippa to become ill.⁸⁷ As a result of his failing health Agrippa died in 12BC.⁸⁸ Agrippa's death would cause Augustus to reorganize the succession plan for a third time. Even though Augustus cultivated Gaius as his heir the death of Agrippa created a gap in his plan. Augustus lost an excellent general and one of his staunchest supporters. He would now have to recreate his plan again. The gap that Agrippa left

⁸⁵ Dio 54.22.

⁸⁶ Dio 54.28.

⁸⁷ Seager (2005) 20.

⁸⁸ Suet. *Tib* 7.2.

was a problem because there was no longer a trusted deputy on standby if something were to happen to Augustus.

Julia, the daughter of Augustus, was now a widow and she was still young enough to take another husband. She was too important a figure to leave unmarried. A suitor would bring his family lineage and the threat of possible offspring to the royal house. Augustus could not leave Julia unmarried, but choosing a suitor for her would be troublesome. Augustus would need to pick someone who was qualified, and who would be able to transact government matters quickly and efficiently.⁸⁹ According to Dio, Augustus was reluctant to select Tiberius. Augustus had to fill the position because Gaius and Lucius were still too young. Tiberius had extensive military experience, an excellent education, and even civil experience in law.⁹⁰ Tiberius had also grown up in Augustus' house since he was nine years old. He had also attained the office of consul in 13 BC.⁹¹ So why would Augustus be hesitant of Tiberius? It is evident from Augustus' actions up to this point that he did not consider Tiberius even a candidate in his succession plan, except as a distant potential tool to use in case of an emergency. Tiberius carried only the Claudian bloodline, and this was why Tiberius and his brother Drusus were kept on the third tier of the succession plan. Augustus kept the two young men in the wings because they could potentially be useful. But the two boys did not enjoy the same accelerated careers as the designated heirs.

⁸⁹ Dio 54.31.

⁹⁰ Suet. *Tib.* 8; Dio 57.17.

⁹¹ Dio 54.25.

According to Dio, Augustus was hesitant to nominate Tiberius for the role of an assistant, but his options were limited if he did not want to select an outsider.⁹² Tiberius was already happily married to Agrippa's daughter Vipsania from a previous marriage. She had already given Tiberius a son named Drusus, and she was pregnant with a second child whom she lost in 11 BC when Augustus required that Tiberius divorce her and marry his daughter Julia.⁹³ Tiberius strongly disapproved of the idea of divorcing Vipsania and marrying Julia.

Augustus' actions created a pattern. Before when Augustus' married Julia to Marcellus he could have just advanced Agrippa and Marcella instead. Marcella was his niece and Agrippa was his trusted general. But instead he has Marcellus marry Julia. Why? The reason was probably the fact that an heir through his daughter would create a stronger family connection, and the adoption would also strengthen the direct tie to Augustus. Augustus does the same thing after the death of Marcellus when he had Agrippa divorce Marcella and marry Julia. The marriage of Julia and Agrippa had killed two birds with one stone. The potential threat that Agrippa represented was neutralized, and Augustus was able to secure a husband for Julia whose cooperation would be guaranteed because any offspring of the union would be selected for the throne. The offspring of the marriage of Julia and Agrippa had been selected almost immediately as heirs in 17 BC, Now that he had not one but two heirs from that marriage, with a third

⁹² Dio 54.31.

⁹³ Dio 54.35; Vell.2.96.1; Suet *Tib.* 7.2.

grandson, Agrippa Postumus on the sidelines, it was not necessary to adopt Tiberius, because Tiberius was filling in the gap that Agrippa had left behind.

The fact that Augustus placed Tiberius in a very restricted position is proof of the hesitancy that Dio mentioned.⁹⁴ He needed a husband for Julia and to avoid going outside the family he chose Tiberius. It is not unlikely that Augustus at this point saw that Tiberius was becoming a contender for power. By that I mean that he had already established and was continuing to have military success, and he was following the *cursus honorum* like any solid politician would. Augustus was not one who liked to leave loose ends, and marrying Tiberius to his daughter not only gave Augustus a certain amount of control over him, but it placed Tiberius in a position that was designated as a temporary one. The position of regent was designed to defuse an individual's power without appearing to do this. This was why Augustus placed Agrippa in it. But Agrippa stood more to gain in this position than Tiberius did, because Agrippa's sons became candidates for succession. Augustus was not ignorant. He also knew that the death of Agrippa meant that he was minus a brilliant general, and he would need someone with military skill to fill his shoes. Tiberius was consul in 13 and 7 BC and for his success in Illyricum in 9 BC he celebrated an ovation. He received a full triumph in 7 BC for his service in Germany.⁹⁵ In 6 BC Tiberius was given the tribunician power and Augustus was planning to send Tiberius to Armenia because the death of Tigranes II had created

⁹⁴ Dio 54.31.

⁹⁵ Vell.2.99.1 with n.320 on p. 115.

a disturbance.⁹⁶ He was more than competent to be expected to follow someone of Agrippa's caliber.⁹⁷

A pattern between Agrippa and Tiberius also emerges. Both the men were told to divorce their wives, and both of the men were placed in a subsidiary position that was designed to define and limit their power. Another interesting similarity appears. Both men withdrew to the East at times of conflict. Also, both men were sent out of Rome almost immediately after their marriages to Julia, both withdrew from public life for a period their campaigns were legitimate, but Agrippa was sent on a campaign even though winter had already begun, possibly because Augustus did not want any interference while he groomed Gaius and Lucius. Gaius and Lucius were not the children of Tiberius, so unlike Agrippa Tiberius was not invested in their political advancement. He wanted to maintain control of the idea that the position of Tiberius, and Agrippa before him, was only necessary if Augustus died.

There was another option that was available to Augustus that did not involve Tiberius. Augustus could have selected Tiberius' brother Drusus to marry Julia. But Drusus was already married to Octavia's daughter, Antonia. Antonia was a Julian and this meant that Drusus was already connected to the Julian family, and his Claudian connection no longer posed a threat to the imperial house. But Tiberius had been married to a daughter of Agrippa, and that meant that Augustus did not have any type of control over Tiberius because like Agrippa Tiberius remained an outsider to the Julian

⁹⁶ Seager (2005) 23.

⁹⁷ Levick (1999) 31.

family. Tiberius was essentially a free agent. So Augustus severs the tie between Tiberius and Vipsania and marries his daughter, Julia, to Tiberius. This filled the empty regent position, and secured a mentor for the young heirs, Gaius and Lucius.⁹⁸

Tiberius was very upset over the divorce of Vipsania. His grief over the divorce was apparent when one day he accidentally saw Vipsania and followed her with tears in his eyes and a look of intense sadness on his face. His attendants had to make arrangements to ensure that he would never again run into her.⁹⁹ The marriage to Julia was seen as necessary and Tiberius dutifully acquiesced to Augustus' request.¹⁰⁰ If Julia were left a widow then there would always be the potential threat of a new husband, and Augustus did not want to leave a gap of that nature in his succession plan.

Augustus placed Tiberius in the role of regent, gained a new lieutenant in military matters, and provided a husband to Julia and step-father to the designated heirs Gaius and Lucius. The succession plan had been reconstructed.¹⁰¹ Tiberius did not receive the same treatment that Agrippa did. When Agrippa married Julia in 21, and after the birth of Gaius in 20 BC he was given tribunician power in 18 BC. This was much sooner than Tiberius. But when Tiberius married Julia in 11 BC he was not given tribunician power until 6 BC. There is a period of six years between Tiberius marrying Julia and

⁹⁸ Furneaux (1896; reprinted 1978) 133.

⁹⁹ Suet. *Tib* 7.2.

¹⁰⁰ Suet. *Aug.* 63.2; Dio 54.31.

¹⁰¹ Fig. 2; Levick (1999) 31.

assuming the position of the future regent and being given the tribunician power by Augustus. The regent was granted tribunician power so that he could make the executive and other decisions until the designated heirs were able to govern on their own. The tribunician power, together with *imperium* made the role of regent functional and important, because in the event that something happened to Augustus the regent would step in. Augustus selected Tiberius because of his military experience and the fact that he had to fill the position left open by Agrippa's death. This planning may reflect the hesitancy that Dio wrote about when Augustus' was looking for a new potential regent.

In 12 BC Tiberius was able to subdue Pannonia. He had finished what Agrippa had started, and because of his efforts he was voted a triumph. But Augustus would not allow Tiberius to observe the triumph. He would only allow him the triumphal ornaments.¹⁰² Tiberius was so successful that he was greeted by his troops with the salutation of *imperator*.¹⁰³ Augustus' refused to let Tiberius accept the salutation that the soldiers gave to him, even though the *salutatio imperatoria* had a long history in the republic for victorious generals.

Previously Tiberius had been on the third tier of Augustus' succession plan. When Augustus selected him to marry Julia and act as the role model and future regent to Gaius and Lucius Tiberius would move up to the first tier of Augustus' succession

¹⁰² Seager (2005) 21.

¹⁰³ Dio 54.32.5.

plan.¹⁰⁴ Augustus did not want Tiberius to suddenly desire the throne for himself and become the embodiment of the potential threat that Agrippa had represented to Augustus before. Augustus had found a way to appease Agrippa's desire for power by creating the role of regent and selecting his children as the heirs. But with Tiberius this would not be possible. Tiberius already had a son by his first wife Vipsania. It is likely that Augustus placed Tiberius in the regent position to limit his ability in gaining the power of the princeps.

The following years saw revolts in Dalmatia, Pannonia, and among a host of other tribes in Germany. Tiberius and Drusus continued to work for Augustus and subdue the rebels. Both Tiberius and Drusus were awarded proconsular *imperium* in 11BC.¹⁰⁵ During this campaign Tiberius brought Pannonia and Dalmatia under Roman control. His brother Drusus was fighting in Germany, and he succeeded in conquering the land between the Rhine and Elbe rivers. His achievements were complimented by Tiberius' success in Pannonia and Dalmatia. This was one of the most illustrious chapters in the history of Roman expansion.¹⁰⁶ Drusus saw several bad omens while he was in Germany, but he ignored them and crossed the frontiers. Drusus attempted to cross the Elbe River, but saw that it was too dangerous and withdrew.¹⁰⁷

¹⁰⁴ Levick (1999) 30.

¹⁰⁵ Dio 54.33.5, 34.5.

¹⁰⁶ Smith (1942) 7.

¹⁰⁷ Dio 55.1.

Tiberius loved his younger brother Drusus, and this is evident in Suetonius when the death of Drusus was announced. Drusus suffered injuries when he fell from his horse in Germany in 9 BC.¹⁰⁸ Despite his haste Tiberius arrived only at the last minute. Tiberius brought his brother's body all the way back to Rome, and he walked in front of the coffin the entire time.¹⁰⁹ According to Velleius Drusus was a man who possessed great qualities and it was an unjust fate that took him from them.¹¹⁰ Drusus would leave behind a son that would become one of the most beloved men of Rome. His name was Germanicus and his marriage would also play a key role in Augustus' next revision of the succession plan.

Despite the sadness that Drusus' death brought Tiberius, he received his second consulship and was finally allowed by Augustus to accept his triumph.¹¹¹ Tiberius had taken over Agrippa's command, and now he had taken over Drusus' command. It is important to note that during 8 BC Gaius the heir apparent was introduced to military service.¹¹² With the death of Drusus, and with Tiberius being placed in the role of future regent, Augustus only had two dynastic tiers in his succession plan. Augustus and Tiberius were at the top and Gaius and Lucius on the second and most important tier. It would seem that Augustus for the moment had a fairly stable dynastic plan. His sense

¹⁰⁸ Smith (1942) 7.

¹⁰⁹ Suet. *Tib.* 7.

¹¹⁰ Vell. 2.97.

¹¹¹ Dio 55.2; Vell 2.97 with n. 317, p. 115.

¹¹² Seager (2005) 22.

of security about his succession plan would increase as Gaius and Lucius became older as well.¹¹³

In 6 BC Augustus would have to restructure his dynastic plan. According to Dio Augustus did not like the behavior of his grandsons Gaius and Lucius.¹¹⁴ They were being flattered everywhere they went, and they indulged in too much luxury. With every passing day Gaius and Lucius became more spoiled, and as a result their insolence grew. Augustus did not appreciate or approve of their behavior. The two boys were acting as if they were princes that were expecting to be given the throne. This is not the image that Augustus' wanted to promote. He had spent his career trying to maintain the façade of the republic, and the two boys acting like spoiled princes were certainly in contrast to this image. The fact that Augustus set up a system for a successor was a clear indicator that the Republic was a thing of the past. One time Tiberius created a seating arrangement for celebrations for Augustus' return from Gaul, and he placed young Gaius next to Augustus.¹¹⁵ He did this because it was apparent that Gaius was Augustus' designated successor. Augustus immediately reproached Tiberius because the gesture made it obvious that Rome was under a monarchy and the republic was dead.¹¹⁶

¹¹³ Syme (2002) 416.

¹¹⁴ Dio 55.9.

¹¹⁵ Levick (1999) 30.

¹¹⁶ Dio 54.27.1

Augustus needed to maintain the image that he had created in order to keep the façade of the republic a secret. But the people had become enamored with Gaius and they even asked that he be voted to the position of consul even though he was not of military age. Gaius was only fourteen years old at the time!¹¹⁷ This was not something that Augustus condoned but at the same time he had continued to prematurely advance Gaius and Lucius with his focus on the older Gaius.¹¹⁸ Augustus did not allow Gaius to become a consul. According to Dio he showed the proper disdain for such a notion, but he did not ignore the people's cries for Gaius' advancement completely. He gave Gaius a priesthood and the right to attend the Senate meetings and to attend banquets with the Senate.¹¹⁹ The popularity of Gaius had risen to such a height that the public had elected a child to serve in a position that was sought after and achieved only by mature adults with political careers. Men who had served Rome dutifully contributing civil and military successes were overlooked in favor of a boy. Gaius was a boy who had done nothing to deserve the position of consul other than belong to the Julian house and be a direct descendent of Augustus.

Augustus was responsible for the advanced careers of his young grandsons. But their behavior was unbecoming so Augustus decided to do something that would get the boys' attention. In 6 BC Augustus gave Tiberius the tribunician power. But he did not do it only because Tiberius had earned the honor. Instead Augustus did it to get the

¹¹⁷ Dio 55.9.

¹¹⁸ Seager (2005) 23; Romer (1978) 196.

¹¹⁹ Dio 55.9.

attention of his impertinent grandsons.¹²⁰ The tribunician power had only been shared once before. Augustus had been granted tribunician power for life. The only other person to receive tribunician power was Agrippa, and he received it for a five year period. Augustus gave the tribunician power to Agrippa after his marriage to Julia.¹²¹ Augustus did not give Tiberius the tribunician power until a few years after his marriage to Julia. This is another example of Augustus' hesitancy about advancement for Tiberius. Tiberius was also sent away on a campaign to the East like Agrippa when he had received the tribunician power.¹²² This absence would prevent Tiberius and Agrippa before him, from meddling with the advancement of Gaius and Lucius. When Augustus created the role of regent he was looking for a way to include Agrippa without giving him too much power. The position of regent would be given tribunician power because, with *imperium*, and in the event of the death of Augustus, the guardian of the young heirs would have power both inside and outside the city. Agrippa was placed in the role of future regent because Augustus was afraid of the power that Agrippa had, but once Agrippa's children were selected as the heirs he no longer represented a potential threat. But now Augustus was older and the death of Agrippa had left the position of future regent open. The only person who was qualified enough at this point to take over Agrippa's spot was Tiberius. But Tiberius already had a son of his own, and he did not stand to directly benefit from the position of regent because the primary heirs had

¹²⁰ Dio 55.9.

¹²¹ Dio 54.28.

¹²² Seager (2005) 23.

already been selected. The fact that there were two heirs, Gaius and Lucius, also meant that Tiberius' son Drusus was outside Augustus' succession plan.

Augustus did not realize the effect this action would have. Gaius and Lucius were insulted as well as Tiberius. According to Dio, Gaius and Lucius felt slighted by Augustus' actions, and Tiberius was afraid of their anger.¹²³ Gaius and Lucius might have felt slighted, but on one hand it got their attention which is what Augustus wanted. He wanted to let the arrogant grandsons know that they were in their position because he willed it so. But Augustus had no intention of removing them from his dynastic plan. Augustus had already demonstrated his uncertainty about Tiberius, and Tiberius was probably less afraid of Gaius and Lucius than he was of the anger of Julia and her faction who were promoting the careers of Gaius and Lucius.¹²⁴

I find it hard to believe that Tiberius was afraid of the anger of Gaius and Lucius. The people wanted to give Gaius the position of consul after he had achieved nothing to deserve it. Tiberius had followed the *cursus honorum*, had developed a civil and military career, and remained devoted to Augustus and his ideals, and he was going to be upstaged by a fourteen year old. The idea is inappropriate as Augustus knew. But Augustus did place Tiberius in the position of regent because Tiberius represented a possible threat if he did decide that he wanted power of the princeps. The role of future regent was a useful cover for Augustus. He could appear to honor someone by

¹²³ Dio 55.9.

¹²⁴ Levick (1975) 33,34; Levick (1999) 37.

bestowing this position on them. The position was powerful, but in reality it was most powerful if Augustus died. It is not unlikely that Augustus was hoping to live until Gaius was ready to take the throne. That way Augustus would not have to rely on Tiberius, but if something were to happen to Augustus Tiberius' position as regent would already be locked in.

Augustus had crafted a succession plan that seemed to account for most of the possible variables. He had two designated heirs, and a designated regent. The heirs were still young, but Augustus seemed to be in decent health, and if something should happen Tiberius would step in until Gaius was ready. Augustus would achieve his dream of having an heir in the family line who, was a direct descendent. But Tiberius was not satisfied with the dangers posed by the sudden public rise of Gaius in 7 BC. In 6 BC Tiberius asked to withdraw to the island of Rhodes.¹²⁵

¹²⁵ Suet. *Tib.* 9.3; Dio 55.9.5; Vell 2.99.1.

Chapter 3: Tiberius' Self Exile

This withdrawal from public life came as a shock and an outrage to Augustus. If Tiberius went through with this then he would put serious strain on Augustus' dynastic plan. Augustus had just given Tiberius significant power, *imperium* and tribunician power, and Tiberius responded with asking to leave Rome and to no longer lead a public life. After his many years of sacrifice and dedication to his career Tiberius was going to walk away.¹²⁶ He gave the excuse that he had grown weary of his life of service and he wished to withdraw. Augustus refused to grant Tiberius his withdrawal. He went to the Senate and complained that Tiberius was betraying and deserting him. Livia, Tiberius' mother, implored him not to go, but Tiberius responded with a four day hunger strike.¹²⁷ There are many reasons for Tiberius' sudden departure. According to Suetonius, Tiberius did not want to overshadow Gaius and Lucius with his reputation, which is similar to what Agrippa had done with Marcellus. He did not want to be seen as a rival to the designated heirs. There was also his wife Julia, who supported Gaius and Lucius over Tiberius, and that Tiberius had likely grown weary of her behavior.¹²⁸ Suetonius also states that Tiberius might have thought that a leave of absence would make Augustus realize the value of his presence, and this motivation seems likely enough.¹²⁹

¹²⁶ Vell. 2.99.1 with n. 320, p. 115.

¹²⁷ Suet. *Tib.* 10.

¹²⁸ Bauman (1992) 111.

¹²⁹ Suet. *Tib.* 10; Vell. 2.99.1. with n. 321 on p. 116.

We can never know what Tiberius' real intentions were, but there are certain clues that can lead us in a particular direction. When Tiberius announced that he was going to Rhodes he received a very negative reaction from Augustus and Livia.¹³⁰ His response to not getting his way is a four day hunger strike. The behavior is likely to represent something close to jealousy as well as fear of Gaius and Lucius supporters. Tiberius had also been humiliated by Augustus' actions. Augustus gave Tiberius the tribunician power in part to signal Tiberius' role as potential regent and to rein in his sons. Tiberius was not going to subject himself to a fourteen year old Gaius and his supporters. Gaius' sudden rise had been wrong, and so Tiberius responded abruptly because that seemed to get Augustus' attention. The evidence suggests that Tiberius was upset because his position in the succession plan seemed to be threatened by the pro-Gaius faction.¹³¹

Tiberius did not leave Rome then because he did not want to overshadow the young princes. And when Agrippa had left Rome, it was not for fear of overshadowing Marcellus. Tiberius, like Agrippa, was angry because a young man with no experience had been chosen by the people and Augustus showed every sign of advancing Gaius in the long run.¹³² The evidence that we have for this was the tension between Agrippa and Marcellus, and Augustus was eager to find something for Agrippa to do outside of Rome. While Agrippa and Tiberius may have supported Augustus it was still painfully

¹³⁰ Maranon (1956) 207.

¹³¹ Syme (1974) 483.

¹³² Brunt (1984) 424; Levick (1999) 39.

obvious to them that Augustus was developing a hereditary monarchy, and was selecting his adopted sons as heirs. Considering Agrippa's and Tiberius' intimate knowledge of the situation, the idea of the republic being restored must have seemed absurd to them.

The marriage between Tiberius and Julia was already a failure in the sense that they were not likely to reproduce.¹³³ The possibility that Tiberius was sick of Julia because of her promiscuous behavior probably contributed to the failure. There was no hope for the marriage after Julia lost Tiberius' son in infancy at Aquileia sometime in 11BC and before the end of 7BC.¹³⁴ Tiberius had not wanted to marry Julia from the beginning, and his despair over losing Vipsania made it evident. This was another example of Tiberius' sacrifice for Augustus.

The idea that Tiberius may have wanted to make Augustus realize his importance by leaving Rome is possible, because Gaius and Lucius were still behaving like children. Tiberius was already in the position of future regent, and it is likely that he felt that his sudden retirement would show Augustus just how necessary he was. Tiberius already knew that Augustus had constructed his succession plan with painstaking care, and the role of regent might have seemed superfluous as long as Augustus was alive. But by suddenly withdrawing his support, Tiberius would make it plain to Augustus that his dynastic plan could not be secured unless Tiberius was willing to ensure they did. However if Augustus was still alive when Gaius was able to inherit

¹³³ Syme (1974), 484.

¹³⁴ Suet. *Tib.* 7.2.

the throne then the role of regent was useless.¹³⁵ It is likely that Augustus realized that Tiberius' role was necessary for insurance. This would explain why Augustus was in an uproar when Tiberius announced his withdrawal.

Tiberius knew how valuable he was to Augustus as long as Gaius was too young to take the throne. When he set sail for Rhodes Tiberius received word that Augustus had fallen ill, and Tiberius hesitated at Campania.¹³⁶ Tiberius' hesitation strengthens the argument that Tiberius was only useful if something happened to Augustus. If Augustus had been really sick and in danger of death then Tiberius would be needed, and important. But Augustus recovered and Tiberius continued on to Rhodes.

Tiberius might have left Rome but he would be unable to escape the persona that he had acquired as a successful general and administrator. He was an accomplished and respected man. It would be impossible for Tiberius to avoid all the trappings of a public life. Rhodes was a significant port city for the ancient world, proconsuls and imperial legates going to the East would always stop at Rhodes and pay tribute to Tiberius.¹³⁷ This demonstrates the prestige and command that Tiberius had gained throughout his life of service to Rome. Tiberius also still had the tribunician power and *imperium* that he had been granted in 6 BC for five years.

¹³⁵ Seager (2005) 25.

¹³⁶ Suet. *Tib.* 11.1.

¹³⁷ Suet. *Tib.* 12.2; Vell. 2.99.3.

Tiberius had left Augustus with no choice but to continue and advance his adopted sons. In 5 BC Augustus asked that Gaius be made consul in AD 1 and Lucius in AD 3, and that they be able to stand for office five years ahead of the normal age.¹³⁸ Augustus had decided that he would continue on without Tiberius. But his succession tiers were significantly upset. On his first tier there was only himself and the absent Tiberius and Augustus was already fifty eight years old. Tiberius' departure had left the role of regent empty. On Augustus' second and most important tier there remained his two adopted sons Gaius and Lucius. At least Augustus had a secondary successor in Lucius if something were to happen to Gaius. Augustus only option was to wait and hope that his own health held out long enough to see Gaius on the throne.¹³⁹

If Tiberius was hoping that Augustus would miss him he was disappointed. Augustus had no intentions of giving up on his succession plan. Tiberius would soon realize that his decision was counterproductive to his aims. In 2 BC Augustus was made aware of Julia's immoral behavior. Augustus was so outraged by her behavior that he divorced her from Tiberius and banished her to the island of Pandateria.¹⁴⁰ When Tiberius received the news he might have been relieved that a marriage that he did not want was over, but he also realized the negative implications of the divorce. The divorce would sever the last tie that Tiberius had with Augustus because his *imperium* and

¹³⁸ RG 14.1.

¹³⁹ Figure 3.

¹⁴⁰ Suet. *Tib.* 11.4; Dio 55.10.14; Vell. 2.100.1.

tribunician power also expired in 2 BC.¹⁴¹ He would no longer be Augustus' son-in-law, and he was no longer marked as the future regent. Tiberius was also no longer connected to young Gaius as his step-father. He had chosen to go to Rhodes of his own accord. He had not been sent there by Augustus. Tiberius had in essence exiled himself. The marriage connection is likely the reason that Tiberius wrote urgent letters to Augustus asking that he not be too harsh on Julia.¹⁴² It was as if he was reminding Augustus that he was still out there and still grateful for the consideration of him, because Tiberius was not saddened by the news of the divorce.¹⁴³ But it was too late. Augustus had severed all connections to Tiberius with the divorce of Julia. Tiberius' tribunician power and *imperium*, which had been granted in 6 BC both ran out in 2 BC.¹⁴⁴ At that point Tiberius would cease to have any connection to Augustus and the government business. Tiberius' self-imposed exile also removed any possibility of his regency, and the divorce had apparently made it permanent.

Tiberius' position was very precarious on Rhodes. Once the tribunician power and *imperium* expired Tiberius would be exposed to assassination attempts by those who were supporting Gaius. It was at this point that Tiberius sent a letter to Augustus requesting to return to Rome.¹⁴⁵ The reason Tiberius gave for leaving in the first place was that he did not want to eclipse Gaius and Lucius. Tiberius had been in Rhodes for

¹⁴¹ Seager (2005) 27.

¹⁴² Suet. *Tib.* 11.4.

¹⁴³ Suet. *Tib.* 11.

¹⁴⁴ Barrett (2002), 51.

¹⁴⁵ Suet. *Tib.* 12.1.

five years now, and he sent a letter to Augustus asking to return to Rome to see his family. Tiberius also knew that Gaius and Lucius had grown older, and his presence in Rome would be seen as less threatening. Augustus' response was a chilly one. He told Tiberius to forget his family because Tiberius had been willing to leave them before.¹⁴⁶ Tiberius knew that he was exposed in Rhodes, but his only choice was to remain there. In 2 BC it is possible that Livia also asked her husband to forgive Tiberius and allow him to return home. She was able to convince Augustus to give Tiberius a commission so it would appear that he had business in Rhodes, and was not being kept out of Rome on purpose.¹⁴⁷ Tiberius was left without recourse, and his reputation had suffered. Instead of a retiree, Tiberius had become an exile. A negative stigma had also been attached to him. According to Suetonius a supporter of Gaius offered to sail to Rhodes and bring back Tiberius' head.¹⁴⁸

The fact that Augustus sent Gaius out on his own campaign is evidence that Augustus trusted his judgment, although Gaius had a rector, Marcus Lollius, to help him. Augustus had been avoiding Armenia since Tiberius left for Rhodes in 6 BC. He felt that he was too old, and Gaius was too young, but Augustus had a change of heart and granted Gaius *imperium*.¹⁴⁹ In 8 BC he had been introduced to the Rhine armies that Tiberius had once governed. Gaius took the *imperium* power in 1 AD as consul. Also in 1 AD Tiberius went to meet Gaius and he was received in an unwelcome

¹⁴⁶ Suet. *Tib* 11.

¹⁴⁷ Barrett (2002), 52.

¹⁴⁸ Suet. *Tib*. 13.

¹⁴⁹ Dio 55.10.18.

manner. One reason was that Tiberius still had officials paying respect to him at Rhodes even though his tribunician power and *imperium* had expired.¹⁵⁰ Tiberius was still respected, and this sentiment could easily offend Gaius because it potentially undermined his authority. Tiberius also had an enemy in Gaius' mentor, Marcus Lollius. Lollius accused Tiberius of corrupting Gaius' troops, and of trying to tempt men to plot against Gaius.¹⁵¹ Tiberius implored Augustus to send someone to check his actions and prove his innocence.¹⁵² This frightened Tiberius and once again in 2 AD he asked to return home, and this time Augustus relented provided that Gaius agreed to it.¹⁵³ But Tiberius would have to return as a private citizen and stay out of public affairs. Augustus prevented Tiberius' return earlier because he was still too powerful.¹⁵⁴ Now allowing Tiberius to return to Rome without making him a private citizen would have jeopardized Augustus' succession plan since Gaius had already held the consulship. When Tiberius left Augustus gambled on his health and hoped that he survived long enough to place a well trained Gaius on the throne. Tiberius' sudden departure left Augustus without a second in command. Augustus was not going to forgive that easily, and he was not going to let Tiberius return to an important public position after he had left with no regard for Augustus' succession plan.

¹⁵⁰ Levick, (1999), 45.

¹⁵¹ Suet. *Tib.* 12.2; Dio 55.10.19.

¹⁵² Seager (2005) 29.

¹⁵³ Suet. *Tib.* 13.

¹⁵⁴ Levick (1999), 45.

Now that Gaius was of age and had increased in popularity Augustus could allow Tiberius to return. It is true that Tiberius caused Augustus a significant amount of anxiety. But that was only because Augustus' backup plan was gone. Augustus had intended for Tiberius to be a place-holder, that is, a regent, in his dynastic plan. Augustus was lucky that his health did not decline during the years that Gaius was still youthful.

In 2 AD Augustus' dynastic plan suffered a blow. Augustus' second designated heir became sick and died in Spain.¹⁵⁵ This was unexpected, and Augustus was probably shaken by Lucius' death, but there was nothing to panic about yet because it was accepted that Gaius was the designated heir.¹⁵⁶ But that surprise was nothing compared to the tragedy that would follow. In February 4 AD Gaius also died from an injury that he had suffered in Armenia the previous September.¹⁵⁷ Augustus' succession plan was destroyed.¹⁵⁸ He had lost both designated heirs in a span of two years. All the training and planning to ensure that there was a backup heir in the event that one might die had been for naught. Augustus was left without a successor in 4 AD, and he was 67 years old. His succession plan was in shambles, and he did not even have a lieutenant to help him govern the empire. Everyone had either died or left.

¹⁵⁵ Dio 55.10a.9; Vell. 2.102.5

¹⁵⁶ Seager (2005) 29.

¹⁵⁷ Vell. 2.101.1.

¹⁵⁸ Syme (1986), 93.

It was an opportune moment for Tiberius. He could not have picked a better time to return to Rome. When Tiberius had left for Rhodes in 6 BC he destroyed his political career.¹⁵⁹ One of the stipulations that Augustus demanded of Tiberius upon his return was that he remain a private citizen, and not renew his political career. Once Tiberius returned to Rome he did as requested and moved away from the Forum to the Esquiline.¹⁶⁰ So it would appear that Tiberius had accepted the fact that his political career was over and he seemed satisfied with his fate. He was likely grateful for the fact that Augustus allowed him to return to Rome. When Lucius died Tiberius commemorated his death in a poem “A Lament on the Death of Lucius”, Gaius was still alive and was left alone as designated heir.¹⁶¹ Also when Tiberius returned to Rome under the condition that he was to remain a private citizen he knew that his days of being a mentor to Gaius were gone. His political career might have been over, and he was out of the spotlight, until Gaius died. This might have been why Tiberius was hesitant to accept the tribunician power from Augustus for a second term.¹⁶² Tiberius knew that he still would not be considered for the position of the true successor because Augustus set his sights on Germanicus, the son of Drusus, Tiberius’ brother, who was married to Augustus’ granddaughter Agrippina.

The new succession plan would rival all the previous ones. In 4 AD Augustus did something that appeared to be counter to his entire life’s effort. From the beginning of

¹⁵⁹ Levick (1999) 39.

¹⁶⁰ Suet. *Tib.* 15.1.

¹⁶¹ Levick (1999) 46.

¹⁶² Suet. *Tib.* 16.1; Dio 55.13.2; Vell. 2.103.2.

Augustus taking power his succession plan centered around two things: family and direct lineage. Another key factor in Augustus' plan had been the exclusion of Tiberius with the exception of making Tiberius regent after the death of Agrippa. And that was done because Tiberius, like Agrippa, represented a potential threat to Augustus' dynastic plan because of his experience and ability. The role of regent was created in order to act as a mentor for the designated young heir in the event that Augustus died before the heir was ready to take the throne. So in a sense the regent was the second in command to Augustus if something were to happen to him then the regent would step in until the designated heir was ready to rule. This role was denoted by the grant of the tribunician power. Augustus had only given the tribunician power to two people, Agrippa and Tiberius. Both men were in the role of regent as a result of the grant. The tribunician power was used to designate a successor. The successor could be in the position of regent, which meant they were usually Augustus' second in command, or the successor could be a permanent princeps.¹⁶³ Augustus always adopted the selected heirs because he wanted a direct descendent to follow him on the throne. In 4 AD Augustus adopted Tiberius. He also adopted his last grandson by Agrippa and Julia, Agrippa Postumus.¹⁶⁴ From this information based on the previous patterns that we have seen it would seem that Augustus intended Tiberius to become his sole heir, and the backup would be Agrippa, but Agrippa was not a serious contender for the throne because Augustus deemed him unfit to rule.

¹⁶³ Romer (1997) 89.

¹⁶⁴ Suet. *Aug.* 65.1, *Tib.* 15.2; Dio 55.13.2; Vell. 2.103.2.

We do not know what was wrong with Postumus; he might have been insane, wildly misbehaved, or just did not meet the requirements Augustus deemed necessary for the job. According to Dio, Postumus was often found fishing, and he referred to himself as Neptune, and had fits of violent anger.¹⁶⁵ Either way it is evidence that Augustus was still holding on to the idea of a direct descendant as heir even if Agrippa was unfit. The main heir became Tiberius when Augustus disowned Agrippa.¹⁶⁶ Augustus certainly would not put his granddaughter, Agrippina, on the throne, and his grandnephew Germanicus was too young at the time. Augustus might have even considered waiting for Germanicus to get older, but the nature of his own health must have been a cause for alarm.¹⁶⁷ Because of his marriage to Agrippina, Augustus' granddaughter, Augustus did want to place Germanicus on the throne; because of this Augustus devised an ingenious plan.

Augustus granted Tiberius tribunician power for a second time in AD 4, but again Augustus hesitated with his final decision concerning Tiberius.¹⁶⁸ When Augustus adopted Tiberius he also had Tiberius adopt his nephew Germanicus who was married to Augustus' granddaughter Agrippina. Germanicus had a family connection to Augustus, but he also had the Claudian line because he was the son of Drusus and Antonia. Augustus arranged a marriage between Germanicus and his granddaughter Agrippina. The marriage would ensure that the offspring of the union would have a

¹⁶⁵ Dio 55.32.1-2.

¹⁶⁶ Suet. *Tib* 15.

¹⁶⁷ Marsh (1959) 40.

¹⁶⁸ Suet. *Tib*. 16.1; Dio 55.13.2; Vell 2.103.2.

direct Julian connection. The offspring of that marriage would be direct descendants of Augustus.

Augustus wanted a way to solidify his dynastic plan for the future. That is why he adopted Tiberius and in turn had Tiberius adopt Germanicus, even though Tiberius already had a son, Drusus.¹⁶⁹ It is also why Augustus granted Tiberius the tribunician power in 4 AD. Augustus was getting older and a successor with tribunician power would ensure that all imperial responsibilities would be taken care of in the event of Augustus' death.¹⁷⁰ Tiberius was now Augustus' son and that made Germanicus his grandson and any children of Germanicus, Augustus' great grandchildren. With Germanicus the empire would continue with a direct Julian heir, and it would also be safeguarded by a competent man until the heir was ready to take over. This was Augustus' ultimate goal.

It seems likely Tiberius did not want the position of regent because it would not make him the direct full heir to Augustus' position. This was likely one of the reasons why he left for Rhodes in the first place because he had been overlooked in favor of Gaius whose supporters he feared. Tiberius had already destroyed his political career when he went to Rhodes or so he thought. He felt that he would have no chance of achieving the position of a direct successor as princeps because Augustus was favoring Gaius and Lucius. The only position that was available to him was regent. The position

¹⁶⁹ Syme (1986) 94.

¹⁷⁰ Romer (1997) 92.

of regent was only useful if Augustus died. It was also especially effective if the regent was dedicated to the selected heir as his own son. This was why the position worked when Augustus placed Agrippa in it. The office of regent would cap the power of the holder, but not offend him because his children were the designated heirs.

In 4 AD Augustus knew that he was becoming older with each passing day and his health could decline at any moment. He adopted Tiberius which made it look like Tiberius was the sole successor, but in reality Tiberius would always remain a potential regent. Augustus was in a sense preparing for his death. He selected Tiberius to become his successor at least temporarily. Technically Augustus adopted Tiberius to make him his direct heir and this would also make Germanicus a direct descendent. This is a critical change in Augustus' plan. Until the adoption Tiberius is a vice-emperor to Augustus and the potential future regent to Gaius. After the adoption he remains vice-emperor to Augustus since he still has both *imperium* and tribunician power; thus he is expected to be a temporary successor and the place-holding regent to Germanicus.

The adoption would ensure that Tiberius' position was clear to the public. But Germanicus taking the throne was Augustus' ultimate goal. Tiberius was now a direct heir of Augustus, but he was still holding the place for Germanicus. Based on the succession plan it is understood that Tiberius was expected to step down from the throne, or to take Germanicus as a vice-emperor when Germanicus became old enough to handle the responsibility of the empire. Tiberius will not advance his own son, Drusus, instead he will advance Germanicus because this is the path of succession that

Augustus wanted. Tiberius might not technically be holding the office of regent, but in all actuality he will be holding a variation of it. If Augustus died before Germanicus took the throne the power would be in Tiberius' hands. Germanicus was not as young as Gaius had been. Augustus was likely hoping that he himself would live to see Germanicus take the throne, and that would ensure that Tiberius would never act as princeps.

This is evident when we look at the new succession chart. (Fig 4) The previous information and the previous structure of the chart reveal the strength of the argument. On tier one we still have Augustus and Tiberius. On the second tier we have Germanicus the adopted son of Tiberius, and Drusus the natural son of Tiberius. This is very interesting because the second tier has always designated the desired heir, and Germanicus is in that position. The new third tier will be filled by the offspring of Germanicus and Drusus. Augustus had Tiberius adopt Germanicus because that would make Germanicus, Tiberius' son legally. Augustus was likely thinking that if Germanicus was Tiberius' son, and the throne passed to Germanicus that Tiberius would accept the situation. Tiberius would not be tempted to try to put Drusus on the throne after Augustus' death because one of Tiberius' sons would already be the designated heir. Tiberius would appear to be princeps, but the succession plan was already mapped out, so that Tiberius was a place holder for Germanicus.

In 4 AD as soon as Tiberius was given power he was once more sent out of Rome on a military campaign to Germany.¹⁷¹ This is following in the pattern that we have already seen. Agrippa was given tribunician power and sent out of Rome on a campaign. After Tiberius' marriage to Julia, and his placement as the potential regent to Gaius and Lucius he was sent out of Rome. This time is no different and it displays the true nature of Augustus' plan. Augustus was still alive and Germanicus might have been too young to take his place immediately, but he was 20 years old in 6 AD. This was young but not as young as Gaius had been when he was put in the succession plan. While Tiberius was busy outside of Rome the path to groom Germanicus is clear for Augustus. Tiberius might have been adopted by Augustus, but Augustus had already secured Germanicus for the position of desired heir.¹⁷²

In 6 AD there was a revolt in Pannonia that Tiberius successfully stopped. Velleius Paterculus accompanied Tiberius on his new mission in Germany. Tiberius had now returned to the public arena, and he had a host of military issues to deal with. This was fortunate for him because it would allow him to reestablish himself. According to Velleius the men rejoiced at seeing their general again because they had thought that they would never see him again.¹⁷³ The success in Pannonia was a tribute to Tiberius' leadership, and he was duly rewarded for his efforts by Augustus.¹⁷⁴ Germanicus also

¹⁷¹ Suet. *Tib.* 16.2.

¹⁷² Figure 4.

¹⁷³ Vell. 2.104.3.

¹⁷⁴ Seager (2005) 35.

contributed to the battle and proved to have performed very well. He detained three rebel forces and acted in a courageous manner.¹⁷⁵

In 9 AD Tiberius received a triumph, an honor now reserved only for members of the imperial family. Augustus and Tiberius were honored with triumphal arches in Pannonia, and Germanicus received triumphal ornaments, and he was given praetorian rank in the Senate, and the right to vote after the consulars. Germanicus would also be allowed to hold the consulship before the legal age. Augustus was promoting the career of Germanicus, and the honors and experience are examples of his grooming. Tiberius's natural son Drusus did not participate in the war, but he was allowed to attend Senate meetings before he became a senator, and the right to vote before ex-praetors as soon as he achieved the quaestorship.¹⁷⁶ The honors being given were a normal occurrence given the success, but the fact that Drusus was included and he was not involved might suggest something else. Augustus was once again tailoring his succession plan. Germanicus was given the right to hold office of consulship before the legal age. We do not know how many years in advance that Germanicus was allowed to stand for the office of consul. But we know that Augustus asked for Marcellus to stand for office ten years in advance, and Tiberius only five in 23 BC. Gaius and Lucius were also allowed to stand for the office before the normal age. Now we have Germanicus being granted this as well. This is a sign that Augustus was grooming Germanicus

¹⁷⁵ Vell. 2.116.1; Dio 56.11.

¹⁷⁶ Suet. *Tib.* 17.1; Dio 56.17.

because he was the preferred heir that Augustus wanted. Drusus was advanced because he was going to serve as Germanicus' backup in case the heir died, much like Lucius had been to Gaius. This is a modification of the three tier succession plan reemerging. It highlights the fact that Augustus was still not ready to give up on his dynasty. This meant that he still wanted a direct heir in the Julian line or at least one with a connection to his own family line. Tiberius did not meet that qualification.

Tiberius was adopted, which might have been enough for any other citizen who wanted to have an heir, but Augustus wanted a stronger family connection. When Tiberius took the throne it would not be because he seized it, or because it was left to him. Tiberius will merely be following Augustus' plan. He would be the temporary fill in until Augustus' desired heir was able to govern on his own. Thus Tiberius would still be acting as a regent even though he had been adopted as a son by Augustus. The honors given to Germanicus suggest the advancement of an heir, and the honors given Drusus suggest that he was in secondary position as the backup heir. Drusus was not yet involved in war so there was no purpose in bestowing honors on him unless Augustus was trying to secure a new variation of the succession plan yet again. When Augustus adopted Tiberius he also adopted his last grandson, Agrippa Postumus. When Agrippa took the toga of manhood in 5 AD he was not offered any additional privileges which meant that Augustus hesitated to depend on Agrippa in his new succession plan.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁷ Seager (2005) 37.

Chapter 4:Failed Succession Plan

In 13 AD Augustus gave Tiberius *imperium* that was equal to his throughout the empire.¹⁷⁸ Augustus wanted it understood that for the moment Tiberius was his immediate heir. But there is a difference between an immediate heir and a full heir. Based on Augustus' actions since Tiberius returned from Rhodes it would seem that Tiberius was expected to take Augustus' place, but to say that is to ignore all the other plan that Augustus had started. The adoption of Germanicus by Tiberius is one of the biggest indicators. First of all Germanicus was too young to take Augustus' immediate place, so Augustus would have to find a regent as before with Gaius and Lucius. Tiberius was the regent for the boys before he left for Rhodes. Augustus knew that Tiberius was the only man who would be able to lead Rome, because of his age and experience. But when Augustus did die the real power would pass to Tiberius, and Augustus would have no way to control Tiberius' actions. Even if there was a detailed plan for Tiberius to follow there was no guarantee that he would follow it because Tiberius already had a natural son of his own, Drusus. Augustus had already included Drusus in his succession plan, but it was as a second to Germanicus. The only way to ensure that Tiberius would place Germanicus on the throne was to make him a son of Tiberius, that way the power would pass to a son of Tiberius even though it was through adoption. This is why the role of regent worked with the elder Agrippa, because his sons were the designated heirs. So Tiberius was going to be an immediate interim heir, and

¹⁷⁸ Suet. *Tib.* 21.1; Vell. 2.121.3.

Germanicus was the actual expected heir, as the succession plan had already mapped out. But Augustus had to create the expectation for Tiberius of being the heir, and then giving the power to his adopted son, Germanicus. This is why Augustus brought Tiberius up to his level.

In 14 AD Augustus died at Nola.¹⁷⁹ The first princeps' of Rome rule had come to an end, and he died leaving behind stability and a succession plan to be followed to ensure continuity. Tiberius was now the new princeps. Almost immediately after the death of Augustus came the death of Agrippa Postumus who was the third and final grandson, and who had been adopted by Augustus at the same time Tiberius was adopted. The adoption of Agrippa suggests at the time that Augustus was still holding on to the idea of the succession of a direct descendent, or more specifically of a close family member. He was, but he had already solved that problem by the adoption of Tiberius and through him the adoption of Germanicus. This was of course a more roundabout way to achieve his goal, and it involved Tiberius which was likely less appealing to Augustus, but not involving Tiberius would have left Germanicus without a rector to help make the executive decisions and run the empire. Augustus was proud of the fact that he was responsible for restoring Rome to peace. It was unlikely that he would be willing to destroy the empire because of his succession wishes. The evidence for this goes back to 23 BC when Marcellus had been the chosen heir, but when Augustus became ill and was afraid that he was going to die he called Agrippa to his

¹⁷⁹ Suet. *Tib* 21; Vell. 2.123.3.

side and gave him his signet ring as a sign of his regency in this crisis. Augustus was not going to leave the empire without a capable military leader, even if it meant sacrificing his wishes about the succession. But Augustus pushed his succession plan to the limit, and he reverted back to it when he recovered.

In AD 4 Tiberius like the elder Agrippa was a general, an excellent leader, and he had extensive experience. He would serve as the interim emperor until Germanicus was ready. Another reason Augustus included Tiberius was that he did not want to leave a man with his kind of power out of his succession plan, because without him being included he was a potential threat. So to return to the main point the adoption and structure of the succession plan around Agrippa Postumus would not be beneficial or reasonable.¹⁸⁰ It would leave gaps in Augustus' plan, and Postumus was a dead end. He did not yet have any children. If Augustus had selected Agrippa Postumus to continue his succession plan he would be destroying that very plan itself. Postumus also was mentally unstable, but to what extent we do not know. It is likely that Augustus felt the need to adopt his last grandson, but Augustus soon banished Agrippa because of his behavior. This might also have been another means of control because if Augustus had not made Agrippa Postumus' position clear it would have been a loose end that could have been exploited because of Agrippa's direct tie to Augustus. Augustus did not want threats to counter his succession plan especially now because

¹⁸⁰ Jameson (1975) 287. Jameson writes that Augustus favored the idea of a dual succession when he adopted Tiberius and Agrippa. But Augustus found that Agrippa's temperament was not suited for the role of princeps.

he was getting older and he might not be around to secure it. Using Tiberius was the safer alternative to guarantee that Augustus' ultimate plan would be carried out, and that was to put Germanicus on the throne as the eventual princeps.

When Augustus died there was a lot of speculation about the death of Postumus because he died the day after Augustus, and many accused Tiberius of being responsible. Tacitus, Suetonius, and Dio are all unsure about the events surrounding the death of Agrippa.¹⁸¹ It is odd that Agrippa died so suddenly after the death of Augustus. According to Seager by the time Augustus' will was drawn up in 13 AD if Agrippa were alive he would have to be included or disinherited by Roman law. Agrippa was not mentioned in the will. If this is the case then Augustus had probably decided to have Agrippa removed after his own death, and the only person who could give the order was Tiberius because only he had that kind of power in 14 AD.¹⁸² It seems harsh, but we have already seen that without destroying the empire Augustus would go to great lengths to ensure his succession plan. Furthermore Augustus had already exiled his only daughter Julia, and Agrippa Postumus was her last surviving son. This is evidence of the extremes that Augustus would go to; if his children shamed him he would not show them any mercy. The death of Agrippa was also the end for Julia. It is likely that the death of her last son was too much for her to bear and she died still in exile. After Augustus' death Tiberius could have recalled her but he left Julia in exile.¹⁸³

¹⁸¹ Tac. *Ann.* 1.6; Suet. *Tib.*22; Dio 57.3.5.

¹⁸² Seager, (2005) 41; Levick (1999) 65.

¹⁸³ Tac. *Ann.* 1.53; Suet *Tib.* 50.1; Dio 57.18.1

It is a speculative possibility, even a probability, that Augustus had Agrippa Postumus killed, but we will never know.

Based on Augustus' succession design Tiberius would not stand to gain by murdering Agrippa. If Tiberius had desired the throne for himself then killing Agrippa would not change his position. Technically Tiberius did have the throne. He was expected to be the designated heir until Germanicus was ready to take the throne. But this is the problem with Augustus' system. Now that Augustus was dead he had no way to control the continuation of his design. He has left instructions for Tiberius to follow, and perhaps if Tiberius had been made the sole heir he might have done what he wanted for Drusus. But the attempt to lock Tiberius into a position to follow Augustus' wishes would be the downfall of his system. An interim emperor only works when he has someone to answer to. Having ultimate power and no one to answer to is a position that would be hard to give up, but is what Tiberius would have had to do if it had come into play. Augustus was trying to circumvent this problem by adopting Tiberius, and discarding the role of regent as vice-emperor to himself. Augustus likely thought that if Tiberius was his adopted son then Tiberius would follow the general principle and let the power pass to his own adopted son, Germanicus.¹⁸⁴ This might have worked if Tiberius did not already have a natural son, Drusus. At first it seemed that Tiberius was going to follow Augustus' succession plan, but his relationship with Germanicus would deteriorate.

¹⁸⁴ Figure 5.

Tiberius' anxiety over Germanicus was not unfounded. Even though Germanicus loyalty did not waver towards Tiberius, that did not mean that Germanicus' actions were harmful. After Augustus' death in 14 AD Tiberius was concerned about the power that Germanicus and Agrippina were able to amass because of their connection to the Julian party, and Tacitus emphasizes of this fact.¹⁸⁵ But Germanicus was not as wonderful as Tacitus described. Germanicus committed many blunders due to inexperience and incompetence.¹⁸⁶ Germanicus had a histrionic personality, and this was apparent when he proposed to kill himself rather than betray his father-in-law. Some of Germanicus' approaches in dealing with the mutineers were examples of his lack of skill, such as the financial concessions that he gave to the mutineers when they demanded reparations.¹⁸⁷ In 15 AD Germanicus also exploited his family connections when he used Agrippina and their son Caligula to quell the soldiers' rebelliousness. When Germanicus crossed the Rhine he went against Augustus' advice to keep the borders of Empire where they were.¹⁸⁸ It was inevitable that Tiberius would be anxious about Germanicus, because he and his wife, Agrippina, were connected to the Julian name, and Germanicus' actions lacked forethought. His actions were not out of malice and he did have victories. But Tiberius was also aware of the heavy losses that were accrued because of Germanicus' mistakes.¹⁸⁹ Tiberius likely realized that Germanicus was over-independent in his actions and that would explain why Tiberius assigned Piso as

¹⁸⁵ Syme (1958) 254.

¹⁸⁶ Shotter (2004) 39.

¹⁸⁷ Seager (2005) 55.

¹⁸⁸ Shotter (2004) 40.

¹⁸⁹ Seager (2005) 72.

governor in the East when Germanicus was sent there. Germanicus like Gaius before him, who was advised by Marcus Lollius, was in need of a rector.

After the death of Augustus in 14 AD the Senate met with Tiberius to discuss the future of the empire. There was a debate between the Senate and Tiberius on the exact nature of power. Now that Augustus was dead it was clear that Tiberius was his heir at least in the interim until Germanicus was ready to take the throne. But was Tiberius actually in the same position as Augustus had been? Augustus' role had been created out of a special set of circumstances. Rome was in chaos after the civil wars and Augustus reunited and supposedly reestablished the republican constitution. But Augustus did not do this. What he had developed was a hereditary monarchy that was cleverly disguised in a republican veil. The only thing that kept the republican ideology in place was the farce of the Senate asking Tiberius to take Augustus' place. Also Augustus had been very careful how he promoted his chosen heirs. He wanted to appeal to the people as if to get their consent on his choice of heir. If the people thought they had chosen, or at least been involved in the selection process, they were participating in republicanism.

The Senate wanted Tiberius to take over the empire, but at first Tiberius refused saying that only the divine genius of Augustus was worthy of such a task. Tiberius also said that in a state that had so many great men the burden should be shared and the outcome would be greater. He wanted to divide the empire into manageable parts, but he never said what part he desired. It was Asinius Gallus, the man who had

subsequently married Tiberius' first wife Vipsania, who was bold enough to ask Tiberius. He asked him which part of the empire he would like.¹⁹⁰ Dio also recorded the story and he wrote that this question caused Tiberius to pause, before he answered cleverly that the man who divided could not also be asked to choose. Gallus realized that he had played into one of Tiberius' traps. It appeared that Gallus had implied that the emperor should only have a third. Gallus tried to cover himself by saying that he meant to show that the empire could not be divided, but this did not appease Tiberius.¹⁹¹ Gallus had been an enemy and a constant reminder of pain in Tiberius' mind since he married Tiberius' ex-wife Vipsania, whom Tiberius never got over.¹⁹²

It is highly likely that Tiberius wanted the throne for himself now that he was in a position of real power. He had been in the interim position much of his public life, and now he held the position that the great Augustus once had. It was Tiberius' responsibility to uphold the precedents that Augustus had left behind.¹⁹³ It is likely that the succession plan was one of these precedents, because Augustus spent a large amount of time ensuring that it was stable. Augustus did not give the power back to the people after the chaos of the civil wars were over. And Tiberius would not be any different. If Augustus' true goal had been to act as princeps for a limited time for the greater good of Rome he would have stepped down when he was no longer needed.

¹⁹⁰ Tac. *Ann* 1.10-13.

¹⁹¹ Dio 57.2.1-7.

¹⁹² Shotter (1971) 446.

¹⁹³ Levick (1999) 223.

But the Senate did not want to return to the turmoil, and Augustus was allowed to create his masked monarchy. Rome had flourished under Augustus' rule, and he had set up a system that would in theory continue the prosperity. Tiberius refusing the power was to protect the farce of the republic still existing. If the republic was still the true goal then a succession plan should not even have existed. Tiberius finally acquiesced to the Senate's request that he continue on in Augustus' place, but he maintained his hesitant nature. The Senate probably would have wanted Tiberius to refuse the power this way as well, because this would make it seem like they selected Tiberius, and they were not following Augustus' succession plan because that would not have been republican.¹⁹⁴

Now that Tiberius was in control the question remained whether or not he would continue to act as an interim emperor for Germanicus. The first clue comes when Tiberius finally agrees with the Senate to take power he says that he only wants it until he grows old.¹⁹⁵ But according to Augustus' wishes Tiberius was only supposed to serve until Germanicus was old enough or experienced enough to govern on his own, but at this point Germanicus is twenty-eight years old and has already served his first consulship in 12 AD.¹⁹⁶ Also Tiberius was fifty-six years old at the time that he agreed to take the throne.¹⁹⁷ Just how long was Tiberius planning to stay on the throne?

Technically he would be a *senex* at sixty. Would it not be more beneficial to Tiberius to begin to groom Germanicus at an advanced pace so that he could take Tiberius' place?

¹⁹⁴ Marsh (1959) 46.

¹⁹⁵ Suet. *Tib.* 24.2.

¹⁹⁶ Dio 56.26.1.

¹⁹⁷ Dio 57.2.

That way it would take all the strain off of him, and he could retire as soon as he professed he wanted to? This seems to suggest that Tiberius had other ideas in mind now that he had the power. But Tiberius did ask for the *imperium* to be granted to Germanicus.¹⁹⁸ This would suggest that Tiberius was following Augustus' wishes and not preventing Germanicus from prospering.¹⁹⁹

Augustus' death also affected the Roman armies. The armies in Pannonia and on the Rhine took the death of Augustus as an opportunity to start mutinies.²⁰⁰ The reason for the mutinies was mainly the poor conditions that they had endured. During the reign of Augustus one of the greatest tragedies struck Rome in 9 BC when governor Varus lost three Roman legions to the German rebel leader Arminius.²⁰¹ As a result of the loss Augustus had to keep men who should have been discharged from the army for a much longer term of service, and he also had to secure recruits from the cities.²⁰² Most of the soldiers were old and tired from service, and they were receiving low compensation for their services. For the outbreak in Pannonia Tiberius sent his son Drusus who was met with defiance because he had not brought a solution with him. The soldiers asked if it was only sons that Tiberius would send to them.²⁰³ The Pannonian legions were not the main cause of anxiety for Tiberius; it was the legions in Germany

¹⁹⁸ Tac. *Ann.* 1.14; Levick (1999) 148.

¹⁹⁹ Shotter (1966) 209.

²⁰⁰ Levick (1999) 71.

²⁰¹ Dio 56.18.1; Vell. 2.117.1.

²⁰² Seager (2005) 48.

²⁰³ Tac. *Ann* 1.22-27.

that would truly upset him. The men in Pannonia took advantage of the uncertainty that surrounded the succession, because Rome had never replaced a princeps before.

Germany was a different situation.²⁰⁴ According to Suetonius the men on the Rhine were refusing to acknowledge an emperor that they had not selected.²⁰⁵ This mutiny had a serious political undercurrent. The men in Germany were hoping that Germanicus would desire the throne for himself immediately.²⁰⁶ Tiberius was apparently afraid of Germanicus and the amount of power that Germanicus already seemed to possess with the men on the Rhine.²⁰⁷ But Germanicus remained loyal. Tiberius' fear of Germanicus is evidence that Tiberius was settling into his new role as princeps. Tiberius had no reason to feel threatened by Germanicus unless he was considering not following Augustus' wish to put Germanicus on the throne when he was ready. If Tiberius was going to follow the succession plan he might have supported the attention and popular support that Germanicus was already receiving, and he would not have been hesitant about his adopted son. According to Augustus' plan Tiberius stood to gain either way from the succession plan. Tiberius would still be putting his own heir on the throne because he had adopted Germanicus.

The direction of the succession was clearly defined, and this might explain why Germanicus remained loyal to Tiberius. Tiberius was acting as a regent until

²⁰⁴ Levick (1999) 71.

²⁰⁵ Suet. *Tib.* 24.

²⁰⁶ Suet. *Tib.* 25.2; Dio 57.5.1; Vell. 2.125.2

²⁰⁷ Walker (1952) 119.

Germanicus was ready to take the throne. The reason Germanicus was content on waiting was that he saw no reason to fight for what he already thought was his. In Germanicus' mind the future was already certain, because his ancestry, adoption, experience, and power dictated that.²⁰⁸ Germanicus might have trusted Tiberius, but his wife Agrippina did not.²⁰⁹ It was likely that she felt it was her children's future on the line, and she wanted to make sure Tiberius kept his word to Augustus and passed the power to them. Germanicus was not a Julian by birth, but he had married one.²¹⁰ This attitude would explain why Agrippina was so aggressive during the mutinies and afterwards as well.²¹¹ Her behavior was a direct message to Tiberius to hold true to his promise to Augustus.²¹² She made it very clear to Tiberius what she was capable of when she stopped the destruction of the Rhine bridge. According to Tacitus there was a rumor that the army was going to be cut off and that the Germans were marching on Gaul. Agrippina went to the bridge over the Rhine and stopped the soldiers from destroying it. She assumed the role of a general, and was considered a hero. Agrippina's act bothered Tiberius. He reportedly commented that a woman had achieved what a sovereign could not.²¹³ Tiberius knew he was dealing with a powerful and aggressive woman. This is also a sign that Tiberius might not uphold the

²⁰⁸ Levick (1999) 148.

²⁰⁹ Levick (1999) 51.

²¹⁰ Barrett (1996) 13.

²¹¹ Shotter (2000) 343.

²¹² Lindsay (1995) 16.

²¹³ Tac. *Ann* 1.69-73.

succession plan of Augustus. Again Tiberius might have promoted the family of Germanicus, but again he gives a negative reaction.

There was a disturbance in the East and Tiberius wanted to send Germanicus to deal with it. He wanted to remove Germanicus from Germany because he was afraid that Germanicus would gain too much power if he stayed there. Tiberius was also afraid of the influence that Agrippina had been exhibiting while in the army camps. He was still somewhat suspicious of Germanicus and did not trust his judgment, and he came into conflict with Germanicus again. In 16 AD Tiberius wanted Germanicus to leave Germany, but Germanicus wanted to stay and continue the campaigns.²¹⁴ Tiberius had to offer Germanicus a triumph, a second consulship, and possibly the Eastern command to get him to return. He also included the requirement that Germanicus should give Drusus a chance to contribute.²¹⁵ Up to this point Germanicus had done everything Tiberius had requested but his sudden act of stubbornness might indicate that Germanicus was tired of listening to Tiberius. It is even likely that Agrippina was urging her husband to go ahead and take what was rightly his. Tiberius' next actions imply that he did not think it was a simple act of stubbornness. When Tiberius sent Germanicus to Syria he removed Q. Creticus Silanus from the governorship. Silanus was a friend of Germanicus, but Tiberius replaced him with one of his own old friends

²¹⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 2.5.

²¹⁵ Levick (1999) 154.

Cneius Piso who had political sympathies closer to Tiberius'.²¹⁶ This would suggest that Tiberius doubted Germanicus, so he sent someone to make sure that Germanicus was following orders. This move was another example of Tiberius' awareness of the power and popularity that Germanicus and Agrippina had been able to obtain. It also suggests that Germanicus might have been developing a sense of entitlement.

In 18 AD Germanicus received his second consulship, and this seemed to mark the fact that Tiberius was still following the succession plan that Augustus had wanted. But tragedy would follow Germanicus' trip to the East. In 19 AD Germanicus became sick and died. He had been on tour in Egypt and when he returned to Syria he discovered that all his orders had been reversed by the governor Piso. Germanicus was furious and a bitter feud erupted between Piso and Germanicus. When Germanicus died shortly after possibly by poison, he was convinced that he had been murdered by Piso.²¹⁷

Whether Tiberius was responsible for the death of Germanicus is not really the important point, although some sources suggest as much. According to Augustus' succession plan Tiberius would have benefitted from either Germanicus or Drusus taking the throne after him because both of them were now his sons. But now Germanicus was dead and there was a hole in Augustus' succession plan.²¹⁸ Because Drusus had been designated the backup to Germanicus he should have stepped into

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Tac. *Ann.*2.69.

²¹⁸ Walker (1952) 111.

the space that Germanicus had left empty. Augustus' succession plan had been clear that a direct descendant should take the throne after him. He had designated Germanicus for the position of heir and Germanicus' children were to follow him. Tiberius was supposed to overlook his natural son in favor of Germanicus even though technically he now had two sons, one by birth and one by adoption. This adoption should have been good enough for Tiberius as well as meeting Augustus' desire for a direct descendant. When Augustus adopted Tiberius he could have done so and left the throne and the succession plan in Tiberius' care. That way Tiberius would have been able to choose a successor when he stepped down. But Augustus adopted Tiberius and made him a future interim emperor to serve only until the designated successor was able. If adoption was the same thing to Augustus as having a son then why was he so fixated on the direct family connection? One can make the same argument about Tiberius. He had adopted Germanicus, and he appeared to be following Augustus' succession plan, but when Germanicus died so did Augustus' succession plan. Even though Germanicus had died he had left behind three sons, one who had taken the toga of manhood and the other two were very close behind. Augustus wanted these children to follow their father and take the throne after him.²¹⁹ But would Tiberius continue Augustus' plan now that the direct heir was dead? The children were young, but Nero, the eldest was fifteen and had taken the toga of manhood in 20 AD.²²⁰ His younger brother was Drusus who was twelve, and the youngest Gaius was eight. If Tiberius

²¹⁹ Dio 57.18.11.

²²⁰ Tac. *Ann.* 3.29.

wanted to he could advance the sons of Germanicus, because they were older than Gaius and Lucius had been when Augustus selected them as heirs. Tiberius also had another option he could make Drusus a regent for the young boys and have Drusus act as a guardian until they were old enough to rule on their own. Tiberius was now in the position that Augustus had been when he adopted Tiberius.

At first it seemed like Tiberius was going to promote the sons of Germanicus. He did go to Senate and ask that Nero be allowed to stand for the quaestorship five years below the legal age.²²¹ This privilege was what Tiberius had been granted when Marcellus was favored over him, and Marcellus was given a ten year advancement. Young Nero also became engaged to a daughter of Drusus, Julia Livilla.²²² This marriage would create an alliance between the children of Germanicus and Drusus, by making Nero the son-in-law of Drusus. But the question remained whether Tiberius wanted to continue with Augustus' succession plan? Tiberius never gave Germanicus tribunician power, which to Augustus' way of thinking would have been the final step in marking Germanicus as the heir of Tiberius, and this arrangement would have eventually allowed Tiberius to step down.²²³ But in 22 AD Tiberius did something that made his own plan clear. He wrote a letter to the Senate and asked for tribunician power to be given to his son Drusus.²²⁴ According to Tacitus while Germanicus was

²²¹ Tac. *Ann.* 3.29.

²²² Tac. *Ann.* 2.43; Dio. 60.18.4.

²²³ Seager (2005) 93.

²²⁴ Tac. *Ann.* 3.56.

alive Tiberius never showed any favoritism to either son.²²⁵ But now that Germanicus was dead it is likely that Tiberius felt that his obligation to Augustus was over. Tiberius had gone from being a placeholder for the future emperor to being the full-fledged emperor himself, because an interim position only works as long as there is someone to answer to. His fear of Germanicus already suggested that Tiberius had decided to keep the role of princeps instead of stepping down in favor of Germanicus. Of course we do not know what would have happened if Germanicus had lived. Probably Tiberius would have passed the throne to Germanicus and overlooked his son because of Germanicus' age and experience, along with the preferment that had been shown to him. The death of Germanicus provided a new opportunity. Now that fate had intervened Tiberius had a choice. He could easily continue the thinking of Augustus or not.

Tiberius could have created a new succession plan that was modeled after Augustus'.²²⁶ The plan could have ensured that Germanicus' sons would inherit the throne and that Drusus would not be tempted to pass the throne to his natural sons. Drusus had fathered a pair of twins that were born in 19 AD.²²⁷ Based on the Augustus' structure if Tiberius wanted to stay true to Augustus' wishes this is what he would do for his own family line. On the first tier were Tiberius and his son Drusus. Drusus would be in the position of regent and would act as guardian until the children of Germanicus were old enough to rule on their own with the senate's agreement. Tiberius had already

²²⁵ Tac. *Ann.* 3.56.

²²⁶ Figure 6.

²²⁷ Tac. *Ann.* 2.84.

granted Drusus the tribunician power which would allow him to make executive decisions. Tiberius could have placed Germanicus' children, Nero and Drusus, on the second tier of the succession plan, and he could have had Drusus adopt the two boys as his own sons. This would still make Nero and Drusus the adoptive great grandchildren of Augustus and would ensure that Augustus had been followed by a direct heir even though Germanicus had died. Drusus' position would prevent him from becoming the sole heir, and Augustus' wishes would still have been met. In the event that tragedy struck there would be Gaius who was the third and youngest son of Germanicus, and the twins of Drusus. These remaining children would have been placed on the third tier of the succession plan as available if a back-up was needed.

But Tiberius did not create a plan like this. If he had Drusus would have been in the same position as Tiberius had been when Augustus' made Tiberius adopt Germanicus. After he came into power Drusus would have felt compelled to choose the designated heir over his own son, and he would have stepped down. Tiberius did not want Drusus to be put in the same position as he had been. But Tiberius was hoping that after Drusus received his second consulship in 21 AD and was awarded the tribunician power that his position would be clear.²²⁸ Tiberius solidified Drusus as the sole heir when he left Rome and went to Campania apparently because of bad health.²²⁹ Tiberius put Drusus in this position and then left Rome. It is likely that Tiberius deliberately did not advance the children of Germanicus any more than he did, and then

²²⁸ Seager (2005) 101.

²²⁹ Tac. *Ann.* 3.61.

left Rome on purpose. The focus would have remained on Tiberius' natural son Drusus, and there was no one to complain about the sons of Germanicus being overlooked except Agrippina. The succession plan that Augustus had revised throughout his life had failed after his death, and it was never reestablished by Tiberius.

If Tiberius had followed the succession plan that Augustus had created, then Augustus' dynastic wishes would have been met. Instead of making his son, Drusus a regent as emperor he made him his sole successor. The grant of tribunician power to Drusus did not signify the role of regent because there was no plan in place to ensure for Drusus not to select one of his own sons for his immediate successor. Tiberius would have also had Drusus adopt the children of Germanicus. Drusus' death in 33 AD was a twist of fate that prevents the knowledge of what Drusus would have actually done. But if Tiberius had set up an Augustan scheme then Germanicus' oldest child would have been recognized as the successor to Tiberius. Instead Tiberius left the question unanswered and after the death of Drusus Tiberius put the two boys in the care of the Senate.²³⁰ This solved nothing and left the succession questioned unanswered until the only children left were Gaius Caligula the last son of Germanicus, and Tiberius' grandson, Gemellus. Tiberius would probably have been inclined to favor Gemellus, but Gemellus was too young at the age of fourteen.²³¹ The only option left was Gaius, known as Caligula, whose behavior, like that of Agrippa Postumus, was

²³⁰ Dio 57.22.

²³¹ Seager (2005) 206; Levick (1999) 206.

problematic.²³² It is true that Caligula was a descendant of Germanicus and that made him a direct family member of Augustus, but he ended up on the throne only by chance. Because Drusus died we cannot be sure what he would have done about any possible future succession. And Tiberius did not reestablish Augustus' plan, which would have clarified things. According to Dio, Tiberius had left the throne to his grandson Gemellus as well, but Caligula had Tiberius' will declared void on the grounds that Tiberius was insane.²³³ Tiberius had left the succession question unanswered. In the end he was still not able to forsake his own direct family line. Interestingly enough Caligula ended up on the throne instead of Gemellus. Because a direct descendant of Augustus, a son of Germanicus, had taken the throne, Tiberius had ultimately remained a placeholder until a descendant of Augustus succeeded as princeps.

²³² Tac. *Ann.* 6.20; Suet. *Cal.* 10.2-11.

²³³ Dio. 59.1; Edmondson (1992) 64.

Conclusion

In 27 BC Augustus claimed to have reestablished the republican constitution, but instead he created a hereditary monarchy. Augustus spent most of his principate trying to perfect and secure that monarchy, and almost from the beginning he created a succession plan, which he changed over time as circumstances changed. Tiberius became a part of Augustus' succession plan because of inopportune deaths and political conditions. Augustus wanted a direct heir from his Julian family line, and Tiberius did not meet this qualification. Instead of Tiberius being a candidate for the succession he was initially placed in the role of vice-emperor, or regent, after he married Augustus' daughter, and he served as a mentor for the heir that Augustus had selected, his adopted son Gaius, who was not yet experienced enough to govern the empire successfully. But Augustus did not take into account the fact that Tiberius would develop dynastic concerns of his own when it became obvious that he would actually succeed to Augustus' position as princeps. When Augustus died in 14 AD at Nola he left a succession plan in place that would ensure that his dynastic wishes would be carried out and that Germanicus, and his children after him, would follow in his stead. But the unexpected death of Germanicus seemed, at least to Tiberius, to release him from Augustus' succession design. Instead of grooming the children of Germanicus for eventual succession Tiberius gave the tribunician power to his own son Drusus. Augustus' succession plan died with him in 14 AD. However, along the way Tiberius developed his own interest in the hereditary monarchy. In the end, Tiberius supported the same abstract dynastic principle as Augustus, but with the difference that Tiberius wanted to establish his own direct family line on the imperial throne.

Figure 1.

Augustus' Three Tier Succession Plan In 18 BC

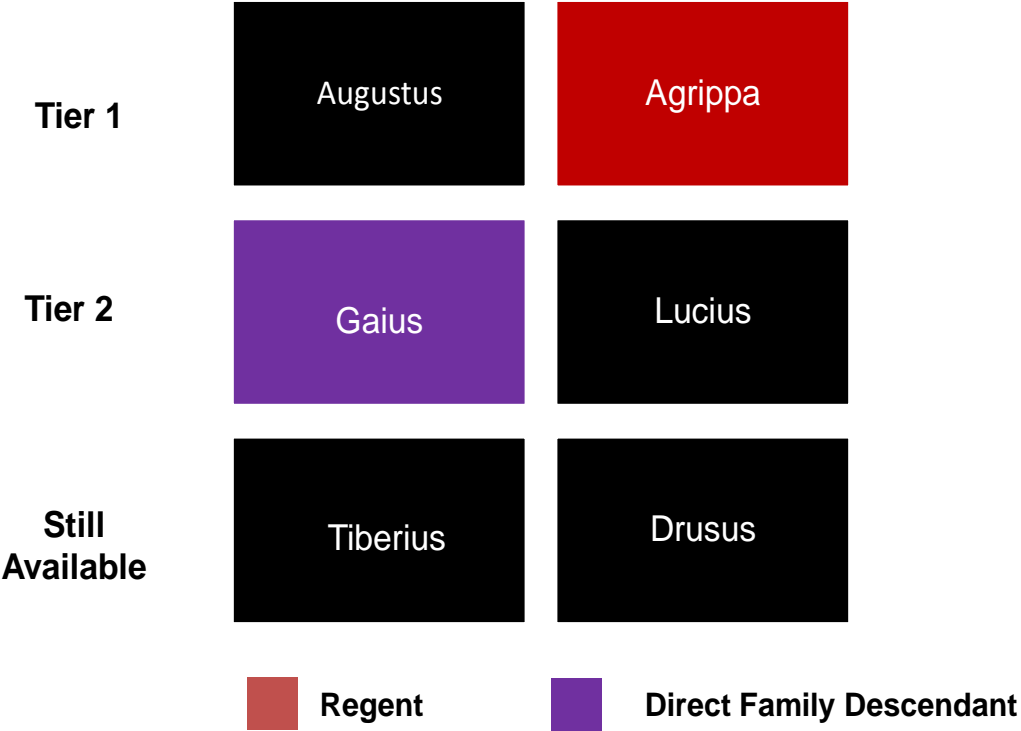


Figure 2.

Augustus' Three Tier Succession Plan After 11 BC

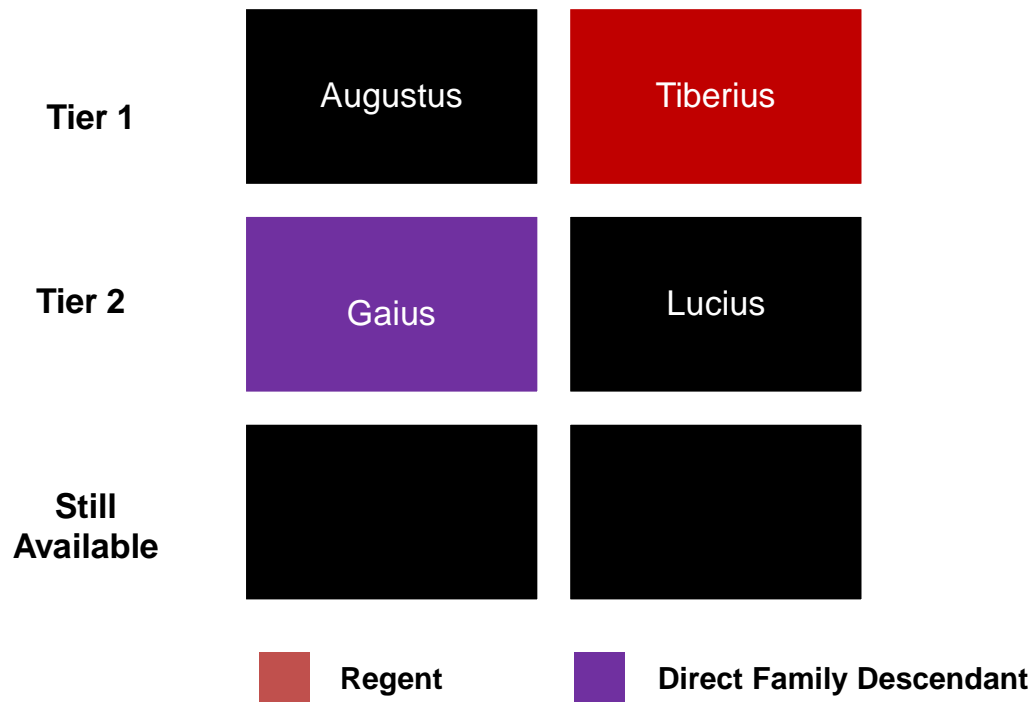


Figure 3.

Augustus' Three Tier Succession Plan In 2 BC

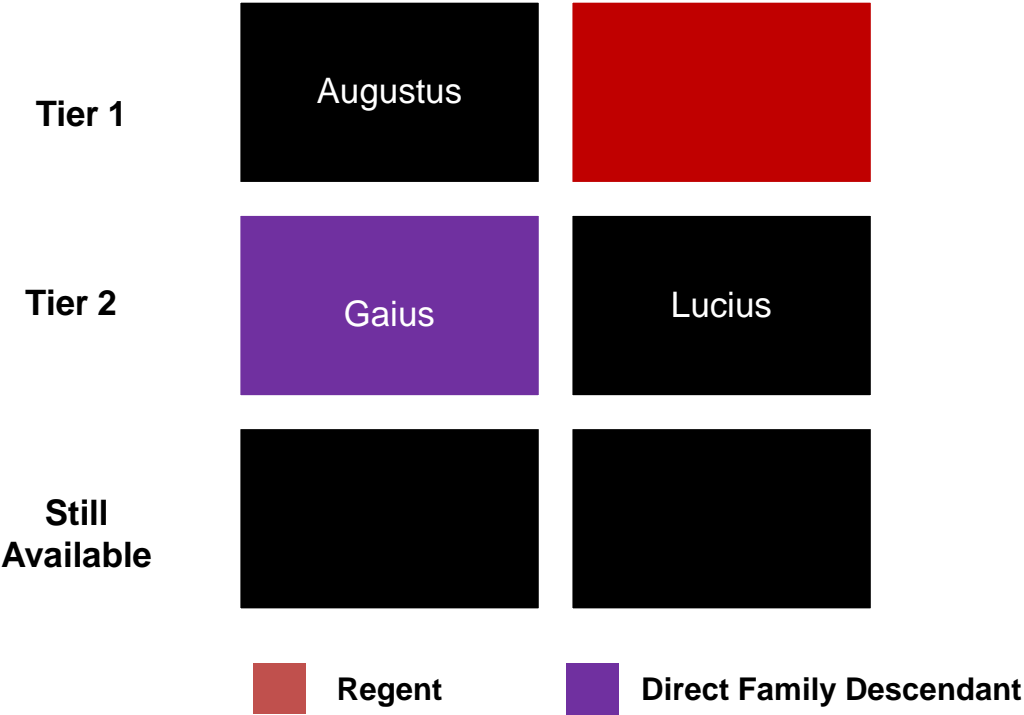


Figure 4.

Augustus' Three Tier Succession Plan In AD 4

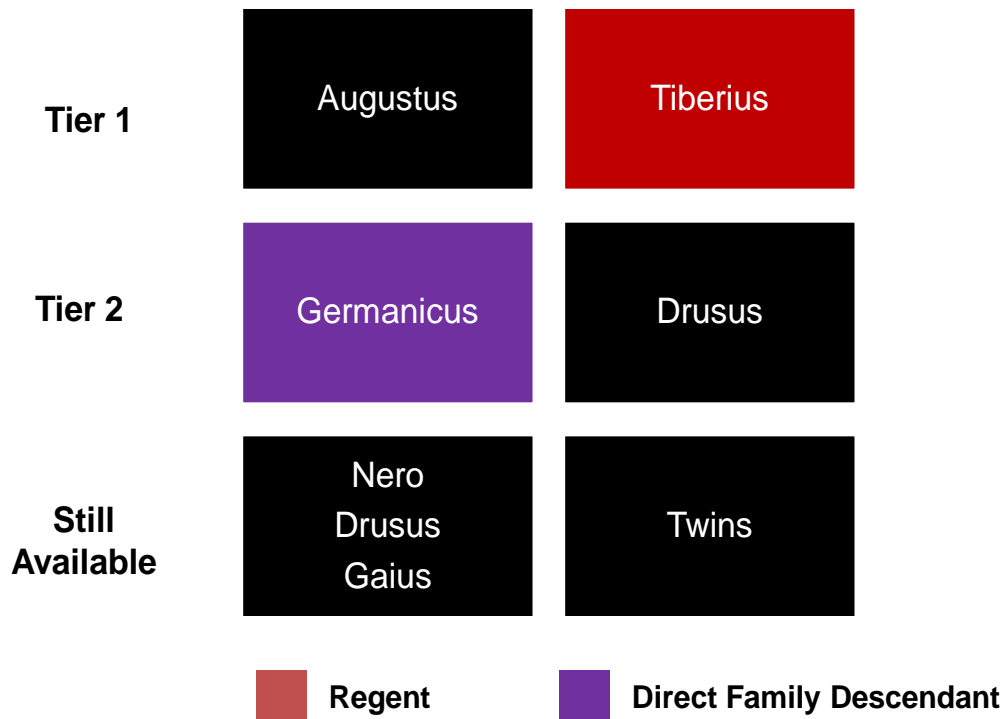


Figure 5.

Tiberius' Three Tier Succession Plan In AD 14

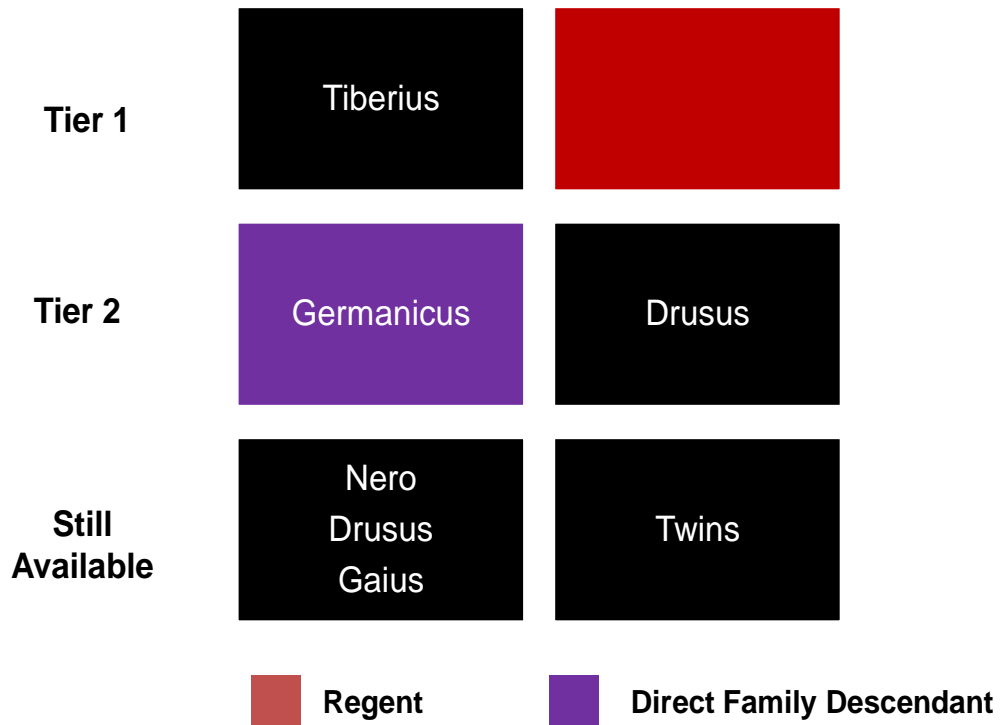
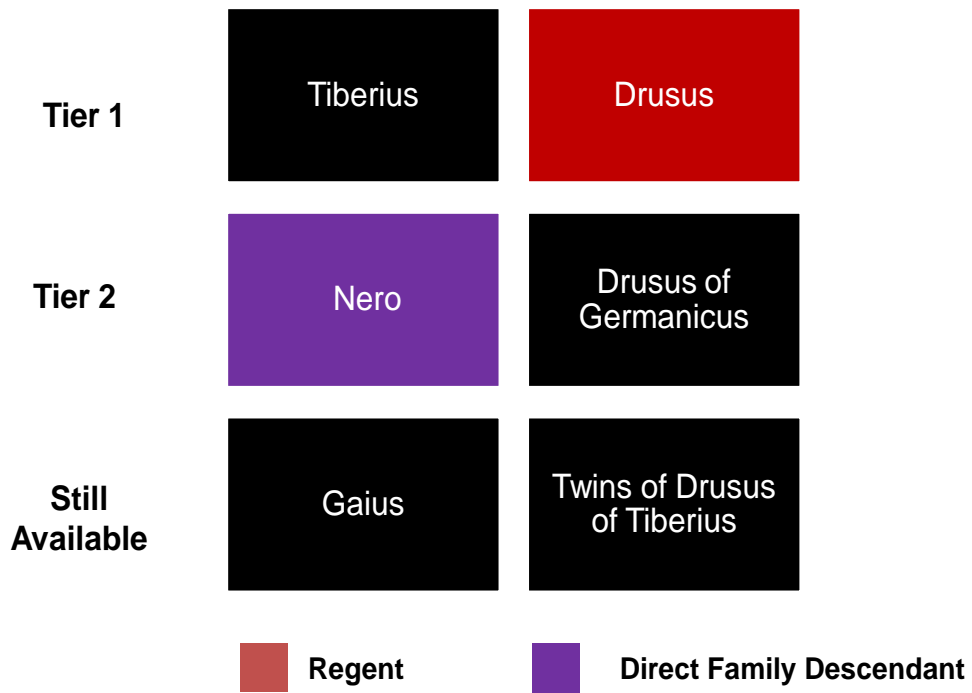


Figure 6.

Tiberius' Three Tier Succession Plan In AD 21



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