

= Pope Theodore II =

Pope Theodore II (Latin : Theodorus II ; 840 ? December 897) was pope for twenty days in December 897 . His short reign occurred during a period of partisan strife in the Catholic Church , which was entangled with a period of feudal violence and disorder in central Italy . His main act as pope was to annul the " Cadaver Synod " of the previous January , therefore reinstating the acts and ordinations of Pope Formosus , which had themselves been annulled by Pope Stephen VI . He also had the body of Formosus recovered from the river Tiber and reburied with honour . He died in office in late December 897 .

= = Background = =

Towards the end of the ninth century , due to the collapse of the Holy Roman Empire the Catholic Church had to rely upon powerful European nobles for support . Pope Stephen V approached Arnulf of Carinthia to protect Rome from " pagan and evil Christians " . After he refused , Stephen V had to rely upon Guy III of Spoleto instead . Guy agreed to protect Rome as long as he was named as the Holy Roman Emperor , to which Stephen V acceded . After Stephen V 's death , Pope Formosus was elected . Formosus and Guy were reluctant allies , and Guy forced Formosus to crown him emperor again and to name his son , Lambert , as co @-@ emperor and successor . Formosus did so , but after Guy 's death , he lobbied Arnulf to rescue Rome from the Spoletans . Arnulf agreed , and Formosus subsequently appointed him as the Holy Roman Emperor in 894 . Both Arnulf and Formosus died within a few years of the coronation , and the new pope , Stephen VI , crowned Lambert as the new emperor shortly thereafter .

In January 897 , Stephen VI held what is known as the " Cadaver Synod " . He had the body of Formosus exhumed from St. Peter 's Basilica and dressed in pontifical vestments . The dead pope was charged with " perjury , violating the canons prohibiting the translation of bishops , and coveting the papacy . " Formosus ' defence was provided by a deacon , but he was found guilty of all the charges . The synod annulled all of Formosus ' acts and ordinations . Formosus ' body was reburied in a common grave , and then thrown in the river Tiber . Supporters of Formosus rebelled , and seven months after the synod , Stephen VI was deposed , and died soon after in prison . His replacement , Pope Romanus is generally assumed to have been pro @-@ Formosus , but he was only pope for four months before he was deposed and made a monk .

= = Theodore II 's reign = =

Little is known of Theodore 's background ; he is recorded as being born a Roman , and the son of Photios I of Constantinople , who was the Patriarch of Constantinople . His brother Theodosius (or Theosius) was also a bishop . He was ordained as a priest by Stephen V. The exact dates of his papal reign are unknown , but modern sources generally agree that he was pope for twenty days during December 897 . Flodoard , a tenth @-@ century French chronicler , only credited Theodore with a twelve @-@ day reign , while in his history of the popes , Alexis @-@ François Artaud de Montor listed Theodore 's reign as being twenty days , from 12 February to 3 March 898 .

Like his predecessor , Theodore was a supporter of Formosus . Some historians believe that Romanus had been deposed because he had not acted to restore Formosus ' honour quickly enough , though others suggest that he was removed by supporters of Stephen VI . In either case , Theodore immediately threw himself into the task of undoing the " Cadaver Synod " . He called his own synod , which annulled the rulings set out by Stephen VI . In so doing , he restored the acts and ordinations of Pope Formosus , including the restoration of a large number of clergy and bishops to their offices . Theodore also ordered Formosus ' body to be recovered from the harbour of Portus , where it had been secretly buried , and restored to the original grave at St. Peter 's Basilica . Like Romanus before him , Theodore bestowed a privilege upon the See of Grado , and had a coin minted , bearing the name of Lambert on the obverse , and " Scs . Petrus " and " Thedr . " on the reverse .

Flodoard cast Theodore in a positive light , describing him as " beloved of the clergy , a friend of peace , temperate , chaste , affable and a great lover of the poor . " He died in office , though the cause of his death is unknown . In her book *The Deaths of the Popes* , Wendy Reardon suggests that Theodore " died suddenly from unknown ' foul play ' (most likely poisons) " . Horace Kinder Mann offers a different suggestion in his *papal history* , noting that it is possible that Popes who were " infirm or even older than [...] their predecessors " might have been elected intentionally . Theodore was buried at St. Peter 's Basilica , but his tomb was destroyed during the demolition of the old basilica in the seventeenth century .

= = Aftermath = =

After Theodore 's death , both Pope John IX and Sergius III claimed to have been elected pope ; the latter was excommunicated and driven from the city , though he did later become pope in 904 . John IX held synods reaffirming that of Theodore II , and he further banned the trial of people after their death . In turn , Sergius III later annulled the synods of Theodore II and John IX , and reinstated the validity of the " Cadaver Synod " .