

## Book Review

# Peter Klimczak / Christer Petersen (eds.), Popestar. Der Papst und die Medien

Berlin: Kulturverlag Kadmos 2017, 312 pages,  
ISBN: 978-3-86599-254-3

This soft-cover book with its eye-catching, colorful cover photo of the pope's famous red shoes points immediately to a highly symbolic accessory that represents a recurrent element in the analyses brought together in the text. The German-language anthology is structured in five sections, organized by subject area, reaching from history/art history and theology/philosophy to sociology/psychology, literary/film studies, and journalism, with five contributions in each section. The volume opens with a short but interesting introduction by the two editors in which they report with humor the complicated, even dramatic origins of the volume: Originally, Leo Fischer, the editor of the satirical magazine *Titanic*, was to be one of the contributors.<sup>1</sup> This led a number of ecclesial representatives to withdraw their contributions to the anthology and one of the editors even resigned. Unfortunately, in the end Fischer was not able to deliver his contribution on the adequacy of the satirical critique of pope and church. Nevertheless, the list of contributors is impressive, with a number of renowned names in church, theology and society, such as the former Polish president Lech Wałęsa, the theologian Hans Küng and Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz, long-term secretary of Pope John Paul II. The book addresses the figure of the pope as media object and media subject and aims to bring together various interdisciplinary reflections on the relations of these two poles (10). This goal is clearly achieved in the volume. The authors with their different professional, disciplinary and national (Austria, Germany and Poland) backgrounds provide a multifaceted view on the topic. Furthermore, they offer their thoughts, experiences and analyses in different genres – some contributions are written in a scholarly style, others in a narrative or even personal style – which makes the book readable for a non-specialist audience as well.

1 During his tenure as chief editor, in 2012, the magazine had attracted broad attention with a harsh critique of Pope Benedict XVI.