religions

MDPI

Article

A Religious Garment for a Marksmen's Festival? On the Theological Compatibility of Local Festival Culture

Sabine Joy Ihben-Bahl [1,*] and Traugott Roser [2]

[1] Faculty for Protestant Theology, University of Münster, Universitätsstr. 13-17, 48143 Münster, Germany
[2] Department of Protestant Theology, Institute for Practical Theology and Religious Education, University of Muenster, 48143 Münster, Germany; traugott.roser@uni-muenster.de
* Correspondence: s.j.ihben@uni-muenster.de

Abstract: A pastor and academic theologian is invited to perform a devotional service at a marksmen's festival in a small German village. Unaccustomed to this kind of festive culture, he also finds himself confronted with theological and ethical questions: Is it possible to provide a place of shooting with rifles and pistols with a prayer service and thus shape it liturgically as a place of God's blessings? One could also ask: is it not *necessary* for theology to engage with communal forms of festivity, not just theoretically, but *performatively*, if Christianity itself is fundamentally festive? According to practical-theological reasoning, *occasional services*, i.e., celebrations of life rites, accompanying liminal situations and transitionary events of human life are growing in variety and importance and "new occasional services" are being developed. Also, the church and (public) theology continuously search and find their role in civil society. After all, there are many life situations in which *God's blessing should be clothed in a festive garment*. But in which way is the marksmen's festival to be considered? Two theologians explore these questions—autoethnographically and theoretically—and thus shed light on the marksmen's festival as a theological topic.

Keywords: festival culture; heortology; occasional services

check for updates

Academic Editor: Hwarang Moon

Received: 31 January 2025
Revised: 8 March 2025
Accepted: 13 March 2025
Published: 14 March 2025

Citation: Ihben-Bahl, Sabine Joy, and Traugott Roser. 2025. A Religious Garment for a Marksmen's Festival? On the Theological Compatibility of Local Festival Culture. *Religions* 16: 372. https://doi.org/10.3390/rel16030372

Copyright: © 2025 by the authors. Licensee MDPI, Basel, Switzerland. This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

1. Introduction

(a) *A matter of just criticism or a case of moralism? Traditional festival culture*

In recent months, traditional local festivals in Germany and Austria have become issues of public scrutiny. Certain elements of festival traditions have been problematized (see e.g., Süddeutsche Zeitung 2024; Med Uni Graz 2024). For example the case of a traditional simulation of spanking women on a North Sea island: is it–after the "*#me too*"-movement–permissible to simulate an act of violence at festivals or—"playfully"—threaten punishment to women when society has become sensitized to acts of violence and sexual abuse? Can an otherwise sanctioned, socially *taboo* or simply unacceptable behaviour become an accepted part of a joyful and playful festive communal act? If it is no longer in keeping with the times or is identified as unethical, festival organizers must draw conclusions and at least eliminate the problematic elements of the festive custom.

But there is also *critique of the criticism*. Those who want to preserve their festival culture and traditions are highly committed to upholding local customs that to others appear otherworldly or out of date (see e.g., Deutschlandfunk 2024). There is also public reflection on the *value* of festival tradition (see e.g., Med Uni Graz 2024).

If we put the question of public criticism of the festival in a wider discourse, we can ask another question: Are *justifiable moral concerns* being taken into account in the problematization

of a particular regional festival culture or a specific celebration—or are we rather dealing with an *increasing moralism* that ignores the value of festival customs and tradition? Are we not to *have confidence in those celebrating* in this way to understand their old customs correctly? Can't an act of violence be simulated "playfully" without justifying, relativizing or even supporting acts of violence? Not only are traditional festivals being discussed—there are also debates about a possible increase in moralism in society. This issue is already the subject of popular and academic debate and is also relevant for *theological questions* in theory and church practice (see e.g., the contribution of the philosophers Neuhäuser and Seidel 2020; or in the field of academic theology e.g., Hiller and Straß 2023).

We need to take a closer look at the moral aspects of festival culture and, at the same time, be careful not to hastily discredit secular celebratory agents in general in a *moralistic way*. Furthermore: what can *theologians* or *church officials* contribute to a critical debate over communal festival traditions in full awareness of problematic functionalizing of religion in earlier times? Hans-Dieter Bastian (Bastian 1993) provided practical theology with an overview of patriotic and nationalist ideologization of religious rites and liturgies, especially in the 19th and 20th century. During the Nazi era every part of social life was explicitly politized. Festival culture was transformed into a heavily designed, preproduced and publicized cult of the masses ("Massenkult") using semi-religious liturgies combined with racist and nationalist symbolism to create new rites (cf. Bastian 1993, pp. 27–30).

The current discussion is taking place at a time when we, two academic theologians, are already engaged in an intensive exchange about festival culture. We discuss questions of festival theory ("heortology") for three reasons: *Firstly*, I (author 1) am working on the festival in the context of a postdoctoral project in the field of systematic theology; *secondly*, we both work in practical theology and study religious festivities, e.g., the arrangement of worship services on the horizon of the Christian festive calendar and occasional services, i.e., "celebration of life rites" (Menzel 2021, p. 55). The topic of "festival" is therefore a subject of research in both theological disciplines. *Thirdly*, there is a very concrete occasion, as the title suggests: What does a theologian do at a marksmen's festival. . .?

(b) *The Challenge: A southern German pastor at a northern German marksmen's festival*

I (author 2) experienced a very special form of festivity in the summer of 2024. I was asked to hold a service at a marksmen's festival (German: "Schützenfest"). As a theologian who was born and raised in another part of the country and had not been socialized in the context of Northern German marksmen's culture, I was not only unaccustomed with the course of events but also had moral concerns in view of the presence of weapons, uniforms, and para-military formations (parades, standing still, etc.). Can a shooting range and the marksmen's hall with all its weaponry be liturgically transformed as a space of God's blessing? The same questions are hinted at but not developed upon by Noß-Kolbe (2018).

One could equally ask: is it not *necessary* for theology to also address these forms of local festivities—both *theoretically* and *performatively*? Christianity, like many religions, is a festive religion anyway. And it might be possible to emphasize how festivity is fundamentally *linked to* religion. It can be stated "that the festival has a religious origin and its roots lie in the cult" (Albrecht 2000, p. 365, translated). Or to put it more succinctly: "Festival and cult are one in origin" (Albrecht 2000, p. 366, translated). Some might also say that the presence of every type of festival shows that the "homo religious" exists even in more secular times and will appear in every way of celebrating (cf. Bastian 1993, p. 15).

What is hoped for, expected, confessed and believed in the congregation is incorporated into Christian festivals (cf. Cornehl et al. 1993, p. 7). The *traditional occasional services* (baptism, confirmation, church weddings, funerals) accompany and process critical transitions experienced by the individual and relationships in a solemn manner. Traditional and 'new' ceremonial events, often described according to van Gennep's *rites of passage* (van

Gennep [1909] 2005), e.g., Church services for school enrolment or gender transition have found their way into church practice and are currently being analysed from the perspective of family theory as "doing family" (Krause et al. 2022) or in the context of the materiality discourse (="Materialitätsdiskurses als Dinglichkeit") of church practice (cf. Kühn and Klie 2023): There are, after all, many situations in life in which God's blessing can be *clothed in a festive garment*. Festivals represent community formations as much as they *transform* them. Liturgical gestures combine and connect communities and 'things' (cf. Lathrop 1998). Shouldn't this essentially "positive" perspective on the festival and the emphasis on its value also shape our view of other festive traditions such as a marksmen's festival?

In this article we want to work on the subject systematically by first focusing on the subject in the wider theological context "Festival research" including an example from biblical exegesis (Section 2). Adding to this and following an autoethnography approach of *layered accounts* (cf. Ellis et al. 2011, pp. 279–80) we will report about author 2's pastoral experience with a local marksmen's festival, describing it in the wider context of the history of a marksmen's festival culture in Germany. The hermeneutical-theological preparation for delivering a sermon and liturgy of blessing to the marksmen's festival will thus be put into historical context (Section 3). The theological reflection of this public liturgy ("öffentliche Liturgie" cf. Arnold et al. 2018) and therefore with the personal experience of a pastor being asked for a contribution to this secular festival will be contextualized within practical-theological research, e.g., empirical research on the ministry of the church in civic society and therefore also in local festival culture (Section 4). In the conclusion (Section 5) we present ten theses. A preliminary remark on the terms we have chosen: We will mainly use the term "festival" for both religious and secular festivities. Some authors of heortology differentiate between the German terms "Fest" and "Feier". Theologian Christian Albrecht works with the distinction of "Fest" and "Feier" following philosopher Otto Friedrich Bollnow for his own theory on the protestant church service, cf. Albrecht 2000, pp. 373–78). For our purpose in this contribution, we won't discuss this aspect.

2. Festivals as an Object of Research

2.1. Festival Research (=Heortology) in Theological Literature

Time and again, festivity is taken up as an interesting subject of research across disciplines in history, sociology, philosophy and theology etc. The festival is identified as significant for human existence, so that it is constantly coming into focus in new ways (see e.g., the interdisciplinary publication by Maurer 2004 or previously Haug and Warning 1989).

In the field of theology, it is *practical theology* that may first come to mind as it theorizes worship practice, treats rituals with a view to the significance of transitional situations, and often refers back to Arnold van Gennep or Victor Turner (Turner 1969). Theologians are aware of the value of accompanying people in transitional situations or processes, which is why they also consider "new" occasional services and establish them in practice (cf. Wagner-Rau and Handke 2019).

Another research interest currently being increasingly reflected upon by theology is the study of *inter-religious* or *multi-religious festivities*. The research has implications for ecclesial practice in a religiously and ideologically pluralistic society (cf. Arnold 2006; Liturgische Konferenz 2006). *Awareness of the liturgical arrangement* must be perceived as a priority. Many things need to be considered for an interfaith celebration: Who is the inviting organization? Where can it take place? Which religious practices can be included and invite people to come together? Which elements should be avoided so as not to be excluding?

In Christian theology, of course, the exegetical subjects also shed light on biblical festivals time and again, reflecting on their origins, and how they have developed.

To name just one study—also one of interest to a systematic theologian and a practical theologian—from the field of New Testament studies: Dorit Felsch, in her dissertation from 2011 (Felsch 2011) convincingly suggests that the presentation of the Jewish festivals in the *Gospel of John*, on the one hand addresses the *central Christological premises* of Johannine theology, since these are developed via festivals, and that, on the other hand, the *Jewish festivals are not surpassed by this Christology*. No other Gospel works so strongly with the variety of Jewish festivals and Jewish festive tradition ("Overall, far more than half of the appearance, ministry and teaching of Jesus described in the Gospel of John takes place in the context and against the background of Jewish festivals", Felsch 2011, p. 2, translated). The Johannine Christology is elaborated and the festivals remain relevant, as they promise closeness to God (on the closeness to God in festivals of ancient Judaism, see Felsch 2011, p. 44).

According to her research, it is not the case that Jewish festivals are no longer important with the appearance of Jesus and thus with regard to the possibility and reality of closeness to God in Christ. Felsch problematizes the claim of some researchers that these festivals are relativized in the Gospel of John (cf. Felsch 2011, pp. 9–14), for John rather concedes to the Jewish festival what a festival can reveal anyway: *the salvific presence of and closeness to God* (="heilvolle Gottesbeziehung", Felsch 2011, pp. 272 and 278, "heilvolle Gottesbegegnung und -nähe", Felsch 2011, p. 272). In comparison with rabbinical literature, Felsch also illustrates that John and his congregation find themselves in an analogous situation to the rabbis, who write about festivals in this period; they have to deal with a loss: the *loss of the Temple* and thus the lack of practice of festivals. Their detailed description therefore remembers the festival and actualizes it as a performative act of remembrance (Felsch uses the term "aktualisieren") at the same time. (On the subject of working with remembering, cf. Felsch 2011, pp. 41–44, also with the assistance of Jan Assmann and his reflections on the "cultural mnemonics" [translated, ="kulturellen Mnemotechnik"], Assmann 1991). John's church also suffers from the loss of the Temple and at the same time from the rupture with the Jewish faith community (cf. Felsch 2011, p. 44, see also Felsch 2011, p. 269). John "transforms collective, identity-forming memories and experiences of Judaism" (Felsch 2011, p. 44, translated). A Jewish festival is therefore never mentioned merely in passing: it is of great importance for the theology of "John". According to Felsch, the Temple is never discredited, as she points out in her analysis of John 10:22–39 (cf. Felsch 2011, pp. 227–45). He deals with it *Christologically*: "It must not be forgotten that the loss of the Jerusalem temple is a reality for the Johannine community. The evangelist must therefore necessarily find a way to enable his community to live without this sanctuary. He finds his way by presenting Jesus in continuity with the temples of Jerusalem as the personified sanctuary of God and a legitimate place of worship. In this respect, Jesus' Hanukkah appearance in the Temple can be understood by those who believe in him as a repetition of the Hanukkah event or as the fulfilment of the hope of liberation associated with this festival" (Felsch 2011, pp. 244–45, translated).

This short excursus into exegetical literature presents a relevant aspect for a theological reflection on festivals, shedding light on how salvific closeness to God is presented in festive garments.

Festivals will remain a relevant research object in every theological discipline. Especially if we look not only at their factual existence, but also at *what they refer to*: The festivity has a *meaning* and *significance* for people. This is emphasized by theologians and other scientists as well as "festival practitioners". It is worth exploring the meaning time and time again and with new methods.

2.2. On the Value of Festivals and Festival Research

When researchers study festivals with different methodologies, the main finding across disciplines is the emphasis that the festival *is of use for humans, humanity and human community*. More precisely: it *can be* of use *if* the festival celebrated in each case *does justice to its nature*—and festival researchers generally want to determine the nature (German: "Wesen") of the festival (see already the title: Kerényi 1938: "Vom Wesen des Festes").

Harvey Cox, whose essay can be considered a "classic" of theological festival research, found striking words to describe festivity and *fantasy*. The celebration of festivities as well as the possibility of fantasy are something that distinguishes human beings; they make them human and are in turn necessary for them:

"Festivity and fantasy are not only worthwhile in themselves, they are absolutely vital to human life. They enable man to relate himself to the past and the future in ways that seem impossible for animals. The *festival*, the special time when ordinary chores are set aside while man celebrates some event, affirms the sheer goodness of what is, or observes the memory of a god or hero, is a distinctly human activity. It arises from man's peculiar power to incorporate into his own life the joys of other people and the experience of previous generations. Porpoises and chimpanzees may play. Only man celebrates. Festivity is a human form of play through which man appropriates an extended area of life, including the past, into his own experience" (Cox 1969, p. 7).

In his time (the late 1960s), Cox is therefore very concerned about the *state* of festivity, the festive, and everything that goes with it. Moreover, this can have consequences:

> "But my contention in this book is that whatever forms of festivity and fantasy remain to us are shrunken and insulated. Our celebrations do not relate us, as they once did, to the parade of cosmic history or to the great stories of man's spiritual quest. Our fantasies tend to be cautious, eccentric, and secretive. When they do occasionally soar, they are appreciated only by an elite. Our feasting is sporadic or obsessive, our fantasies predictable and politically impotent. Neither provides the inspiration for genuine social transformation". (Cox 1969, p. 4)

A theologian or religious person must not simply accept the loss, the lack, the poor state of festivals; after all, it also affects him/her and his/her religion, because: "I must also argue from theological premises that man will grasp his divine origin and destiny only if he regains the capacity for festive revelry and the ability to fantasize" (Cox 1969, p. 10; see also Cox 1969, pp. 14 and 18).

The festival is of use for people, which is why humans celebrate. One's own existence, the world, and creation, are *affirmed* in the festival. This can be said in reference to Josef Pieper's work, in which he identifies a common feature of all festivals when he considers research into the history of religion and cultural theology (cf. Pieper [1963] 2012, pp. 33–34): "Every festive joy ignited by the concrete is necessarily preceded by an absolutely universal affirmation [=German: "Zustimmung"], extending to the world as a whole, both to the reality of things and to the existence of man himself" (Pieper [1963] 2012, p. 30, translated). Or, conversely, the value can be seen in the fact that the festival *criticizes* what happens in the world and in everyday life, so that the festival can be seen as an "antipole" to the world. Something that would never be allowed in everyday life is permitted in the festival. Excesses and ecstasy are thus to be explained. One can think here of Sigmund Freud's early reflections on the taboo, and the festival as *excess* ("Exzeß", cf. Freud [1913] 1948, p. 170). There are also forms that combine both views of the world and everyday life (i.e., the affirmative perspective and the perspective of the counterpart), and could even *mediate* them, as Christian Albrecht has identified for his concept of worship. Besides Albrecht explains why there are forms of "mediation" (German: "Vermittlung") and why

the 'opposition' of the types is a "relative opposition" (Albrecht 2000, p. 372, translated; cf. Albrecht 2000, pp. 372–74).

In any case, the theologian who researches festivals is looking for a method to show how the sense of affirmation of the world in a genuine festival does not exclude criticism of the world when it proves to be inhuman. The world, or—in Christian terms—creation, can be gratefully accepted and yet the importance of a salutary interruption can be emphasized. It then functions as a necessary *corrective*. As a different day from everyday life, the festive day interrupts everyday reality in a salutary way. This in turn has consequences for everyday life. It can be perceived anew. *Work*, for example, is classified according to Cox: The festival is "important because it puts work in its place. It suggests that work, however rewarding, is not the highest end of life but must contribute to personal human fulfillment. We need stated times for nonwork to remind us that not even an astronomical gross national product and total employment can bring a people salvation" (Cox 1969, p. 5).

The festival is meaningful, which is why researchers also point out risks in their concepts if the festivals are no longer celebrated in the "good" sense, i.e., everyday life is not interrupted in a salutary way and the community is not strengthened. This is emphasized by theological approaches to festival research such as Cox's essay, but also by Gerhard M. Martin's seminal work "Fest und Alltag" (Martin 1973).

Researchers of festivities like Cox repeatedly worry that the "true" festival—i.e., the one that fulfils the aforementioned functions—is being lost. And this is happening for those who are worried about the state of the festival despite the multitude of old and new ways of celebrating—whether in local festive culture, in large-scale events such as music festivals, or when new occasional services emerge in church contexts. People find many ways to celebrate and nevertheless the festival has gone. These researchers on the festival already knew that: Martin describes the "crisis of game, phantasy and creativity" (Martin 1973, p. 9, translated) and the loss of celebrating festivals is the biggest sign of this (Martin 1973, p. 8: "inability and unwillingness to celebrate festivals", translated). Pieper problematizes "the pseudo-festival" (translated, German: "das Pseudofest") in all times (cf. Pieper [1963] 2012, p. 59; and see also Cox 1969, p. 4, but in his time Cox is carefully hopeful that "we are witnessing a rebirth of the spirit of festivity and fantasy", Cox 1969, p. 5).

Now, a Protestant or Catholic theologian can historically reappraise the church's festival culture, shed light on the relevance of the Christian festival calendar, discover which "transitions" should also be accompanied and how sensitivity can be shown in the respective arrangements. Theologians can also examine the function that even the mention of certain festivals in concise passages of the Bible performs for a certain theology. Theology can also broaden its horizons beyond its own religious festivals in order to explore the general value of the festival, as Cox or Martin have done. Theological researchers of festivals can ask questions about the ethical added value and point out problematic aspects.

After these theoretical reflections, the theological approach to an invitation to a festival, namely a marksmen's festival, and the arrangement of an ecclesiastical act following the invitation, will be considered in the form of an autoethnographical account (cf. Ellis et al. 2011).

3. Encounter with and Reflection on the Marksmen's Festival—An Invitation for Theological Discussion

3.1. Personal Encounter with the Marksmen's Festival: The Invitation

If you are a pastor living in the north-west of Germany in a rural region, the question of the Christian church's contribution to the local festival culture takes on a very concrete dimension. An example of this is the request from a traditional marksmen's club on the occasion of its 250th anniversary celebration. The territory of the marksmen's club Westerhamm is located in the area of the Protestant parish of St. Nicolai Cadenberge-Wingst,

south of the estuary of the river Elbe into the North Sea. The nearest towns are the port city of Cuxhaven to the west and the former Hanseatic town of Stade to the east. Economically, the region is strongly characterized by the technology companies Siemens-Gamesa (wind power) in Cuxhaven, and Airbus in Hamburg, but also by agriculture and handicrafts. The general population is well educated and middle class. The population statistics for the municipality of Cadenberge show 4100 people with an average age of 47.5 years. The area is traditionally Protestant and belongs to the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Hanover. For decades, it has been the tradition at local marksmen's festivals that a church service is celebrated during the festival weekend. So I, author 2, was invited to hold the service on the main day of the marksmen's festival. I have lived—as a private person—in the parish for about two years. At the time of the service, the local pastor, who had worked in the area for more than 20 years, had retired. For me, a pastor from the south of Germany, the marksmen's movement is foreign and associated with images of parades of predominantly male uniform-wearers with rifles and excessive alcohol consumption.

What can be said from the Protestant pulpit about marksmanship when several hundred green-clad marksmen, women and men, diverse as usual, look forward to a person in a traditional gown, the official dress of a pastor, in a banquet hall on Sunday morning after days of intense celebration?

In *terms of fundamental theology*, this could be described as a matter of *public theology*: as a question about the public communicability of church claims to validity and as a question about the role of the church in the public sphere in terms of a Christian orientation, including critical questioning of social practices (cf. Höhne 2020). As a pastor, however, I have not been invited to give a lecture on the sense and nonsense of marksmanship, but to a festive service. Therefore, the following describes the *homiletic process*, which is to be understood as a *hermeneutic movement* between the concrete situation of 'celebration', biblical textual reference, and reflection on one's own position on both. In the horizon of heortological considerations, a sermon can offer a theological perspective on a social culture of celebration, which, on the one hand, celebrates certain social practices of the community, and, on the other hand, is to be considered in its relation to everyday life.

3.2. The Historical Background to Marksmen's Festivals in Germany

In order to understand the event, it is necessary to research the beginnings of the local marksmen's association, which looks back on 250 years of history. The local marksmen's club (*Schützenverein*) refers to a note in a minute book from 1774, but marksmanship in Germany is much older and was added to the UNESCO list of Germany's intangible cultural heritage in 2015 (cf. UNESCO n.d.).

In terms of their origins, marksmen's clubs have little to do with the protection of land and property by force of arms (see here and in the following: Kreyenschulte 2017). From the 14th and subsequent centuries, there were specially equipped mercenaries and armies for the defence of land and city, property and life, who were much better at shooting and were specially trained for combat. The marksmen were good at shooting, but the social gathering stood in the way of intensive practice for the purpose of military training. Shooting, first with crossbows and later with firearms, primarily served sportive purpose and was mainly practiced as a sporting event in times of peace. Shooting was not aimed at people or human-shaped targets, but at symbolic objects such as a wooden bird (still common in many Westphalian shooting clubs today) or targets. Shooting was not associated with any danger to life and limb, not even to the lives of animals.

However, this does not mean that there were not attempts to enlist the marksmen's guilds and fraternities as citizen militia, and to enlist them for the purpose of military training. The last time this happened was in the 20th century, in particular during the

National Socialist era, when the entire shooting community was completely reorganized, the Führer principle (Führerprinzip) was introduced, only so-called "Volksdeutsche" were admitted, and everything was made a matter for the "Reich". After Adolf Hitler seized power, the NSDAP attempted to incorporate the marksmen into the German Shooting Association (Deutscher Schützenverband) and subject them to the rules of the Nazi *Reichsbund für Leibesübungen* by making them adopt the uniform statutes. Swastika flags were to be carried in parades (cf. Heft 2016, p. 400). Small, independent and potentially unruly village clubs were a thorn in the side of the Nazis, but nevertheless tried to defend themselves against being brought into line.

It is significant to address the question of the instrumentalization of sport shooting for military and national patriotic purposes during the sermon at a festive service, because the question of a citizen's militia is currently being discussed again. The Russian war in Ukraine and the images of fighting in trenches on Ukraine's eastern border evoke fears that were thought to have been overcome long ago. Even before that, militias had been formed in the Baltic States, for example, in which amateur soldiers practiced their weapons and tried out hand-to-hand combat (cf. Richter 2019). In Germany, matters of defence are the exclusive responsibility of the military, are subject to the state's monopoly on the use of force, and are not the responsibility of militias. At an anniversary celebration, this can on the one hand be a reason for celebrating—namely gratitude for the opportunity to practice shooting exclusively for sportive purposes in times of a peace that had lasted for 8 decades—and on the other hand the content of a communal prayer as a plea for peace, that they may only need to use weapons for sportive purposes in the future.

A worship service in the secular celebration of the marksmen's club requires a clarification of the relationship between church and community. Marksmen's clubs are not part of the church and the religious speech of a pastor will not change that. Of course there have been–unsuccessful–attempts to incorporate the clubs in Protestant areas.

Marksmen joined together in free associations, a specifically civic form of social formation, which had also been an expression of freedom and voluntariness in German-speaking Christianity since the end of the 18th century in contrast to the established church, and were dedicated to social and missionary purposes. The characteristics of voluntariness and the purpose of the association are an expression of the proximity of conviction and social practice to the reality of life (cf. Häusler and Benedict 2010). They are an example of a civil society of free citizens. Their purpose is not to serve under any kind of authority, neither secular nor ecclesial. There were and still are Catholic fraternities in Catholic areas that are responsible for marksmanship. In the past, they served to protect and publicize the faith, marched in processions through villages and towns and gathered for mass, but afterwards, like everyone else, they also went drinking. In the statutes of a Holy Spirit fraternity (Heilig-Geist-Gebetsbruderschaft) from the early 18th century, in which the marksmen's festival is also regulated, the order of the royal shooting—i.e., the annual high festival—is followed by that of the feast; religious duties take precedence over this (cf. Kreyenschulte 2017, p. 149). In Protestant areas, people kept a much greater distance from the clerical authorities, but even there three things were part of marksmanship: The trained shooting competition, the communal meal with the appropriate guild beer in sufficient quantities, and the commemoration of the deceased marksmen.

The rulers and the church of both denominations were suspicious of the fact that the marksmen's festivities were at times rough, and that the traditional guild beer loosened some inhibitions. The authorities resorted to social discipline, or to be more precise: they issued instructions on "diligence, a sense of duty and abstinence" (Kreyenschulte 2017, p. 173, translated).

In Protestant areas, the bachelor marksmen's guilds were a particular problem. In the town of Steinfurt, for example, they attracted attention in 1610 for "disgraceful abuse of disorderly, superfluous eating and drinking" (according to a quote from Kreyenschulte Kreyenschulte 2017, p. 176, translated). As early as 1571, the Bishop of Münster decreed that the shooting of birds could only take place once a year and should not last longer than one afternoon (cf. Kreyenschulte 2017, p. 174). Every participant was to return home to their farm and cattle before nightfall. Perhaps it is because of this official regulation that many shooting clubs were founded in neighboring farming communities, which today still exists (there are five more in the immediate vicinity of the Westerhamm shooting club, all of which invite each other to their marksmen's festivals). This provided an opportunity for many celebrations, several times a year.

The shooting guilds themselves called for moderation and punished improper behaviour. They preferred to sort things out, including excesses, among themselves and without the intervention of other authorities (cf. Kreyenschulte 2017, pp. 179–80).

According to Kreyenschulte, the guild system was finally replaced by the association system in the 19th century, which meant that status or rank was no longer decisive for who could, and wanted to, become a member (cf. Kreyenschulte 2017, p. 194). To this day, this principle based on voluntariness and purpose does not subordinate the social association to extraneous principles such as ethnicity or political affiliation. Membership is also not reserved for men only, or for members of a particular denomination or religious affiliation. It is fair to say that the shooting club of Westerhamm, like many others, allows for diversity; the decisive factor is whether or not you agree with the purpose of the club. For this reason, the club also frowns upon the inclusion of churches. A liturgical service with a sermon is therefore part of the celebration, but not an opportunity for religious reprimanding.

3.3. Theological Reflection

The Bible text, which was chosen as the sermon pericope for the corresponding Sunday comes from the Letter to the Ephesians (Eph 2:17–22), and can therefore serve as an impulse to encourage reflection. It relates to the topic of *peace*: Peace for all people! "to you who were far off and peace to those who were near" (Eph 2:17, English Standard Version). What the reading describes in old traditional words helps to interpret a festival like this: No longer drawing dividing lines—at that time, with a view to the historical context of the biblical text, these were the Christians who were at home in Judaism and those who came from paganism. Both had equal access to God as Father through Jesus; privileges no longer apply. "So then you are no longer strangers [. . .], but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God" (Eph 2:19, English Standard Version). This can also continue to encourage an association like the marksmen not to differentiate between strangers and friends, but to celebrate as brothers and sisters! Caring for one another as fellow citizens, cultivating neighbourly life. All attempts to exclude individual people based on their skin, health, origin, gender identity or political views will fail. All attempts to use an association for non-statutory purposes will also fail. Celebrating community in freedom is the reason for and an expression of sociability! This can also be disinhibited—controlled disinhibition is the essence of the festival (see above), which can best be studied at shooting festivals: with colourful decorations on the houses and in the streets and a parade in festive dress, with dancing until morning and a festival lasting several days. Who shoots is sober; at a target, no one gets hurt. A festival expresses what holds the community together. A marksmen's festival also celebrates the cultivation of values associated with tradition and community. The local statutes of Westerhamm mention the promotion of youth, social behaviour and the commemoration of the deceased. And—not to forget—the sporting idea. Pesonen et al. (2018) did an empirical-qualitative study on the societal role of Evangelical

Lutheran parishes in rural Finland. Although they did not focus on local festivals with church participation as described in the above autoethnographic vignette, the find a similar relation between the "*rural development frame* and the *religious frame*. Rural development frame is commonly used when people make sense of actions carried out by LAGs [Local Action Groups], village action groups or local policy actors. [. . .] The rural development frame is a non-religious frame. However, when church and parishes are involved in action, some sort of a religious framing is commonly expected" (Pesonen et al. 2018, p. 71).

In the sermon of author 2, festivals are described as opportunities to reflect on "what ultimately holds us together. This was also the case in early Christianity: 'built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone', (Eph 2:20, English Standard Version) says the Biblical passage, 'in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows (into a holy temple in the Lord)' (Eph 2:21, English Standard Version)". This reflects what Pesonen et al. find among the majority of their interviewed Lutheran parish ministers in rural Finland: "[T]he rural development frame is positively evaluated, and it is possible to reframe religiously the rural development frame. The rural development frame and the religious frame are presented as compatible" (Pesonen et al. 2018, p. 78).

Speaking to the local community gathered for the festival service, the sermon refers to one of the fundamental Judeo-Christian frames: "The fundamental values that can hold everything together are what we know in the Judeo-Christian tradition as the Ten Commandments. They are ancient but highly topical in our time. *To sanctify the holy day* also means the communal festive times, so that everyday life and work does not dominate everything. *Honoring our fathers and mothers* means remembering the people of previous generations and celebrating the old and the elderly. *Do not kill*: this means shooting only at wooden birds! *Do not commit adultery*: respect what is sacred to your fellow human being and what he or she has promised for a lifetime. *Do not steal*: do not take advantage of others and do not violate the rules of fair play. *No false talk or lies, no slander, no defamation of character, no malicious slogans*. *Respect for the "goods and chattels"*, the property of others, has always been the basis of good community in a village. A marksmen's club celebrating its 250th anniversary also celebrates the values it stands for. By standing up for each other when a member is ill. That you help when you have to take a sister or brother to the grave. When flood, hail, or misfortune strikes, there is a need for a community that can celebrate together and lend a hand. Being together while eating and drinking, singing and dancing, praying together (even if not all in the same direction) helps to ensure that everyone who is together will continue to respect these values in the future, and that we can live in a country where these values are respected by everyone".

4. Materials and Methods from Practical Theology

The experience of the invitation to the marksmen's festival and the handling of it, which led to a few surprises, such as dealing with the interesting history of marksmanship, was a personal one. Nevertheless, as an autoethnographically documented vignette used for reflective analyses, it invites readers to engage in comparative discourse: is one rural pastor's experience and praxis 'reproducible'? When you report to other theologians, other experiences are called upon: Theologians—especially those who live in rural areas—are often in demand when it comes to the spiritual and liturgical accompaniment of a marksmen's festival or similar local customs. Arnold et al. describe quite a number of political, civil or community based occasions where "the public" ("Die Öffentlichkeit") asks representatives of church and religions for "clarification and interpretation" (Arnold et al. 2018, p. 16, translated): inaugurations, jubilees, carnival as well as commemorative events, respecting and expecting that interpretation by religious leaders is based on holy scripture, even as

participants may or may not consider themselves religious or spiritual. We will now also look at the classification of the festive event from a practical theological perspective and thus present methodological considerations.

In practical theological terms, a religious service on the occasion of a secular festival of a social group can be categorized as an occasional service. The community specific forms and festivals differ from region to region. In pluralistic societies, in which religious freedom allows representatives of faith communities to freely choose to make a contribution and to speak freely, the *ritual-ceremonial interruption* of the festival, which in turn already *interrupts* everyday life, offers the opportunity to interpret both: the festival as well as the community and its obligations. The different local players, gathered together with the parish church representative, share an interest in the common good, sometimes critical, but mostly affirming common values. In the sense of public theology (see the definition of the term and concepts in Körtner et al. 2020), the liturgical-homiletic arrangement provides the possibility of a resonance that is both *horizontal*—as a communal experience of the co-celebrants in all their diversity—and *vertical*: as an affirmation of the common foundations and values (cf. Rosa 2019). The interpretation by means of traditional texts and symbolic gestures also creates a vertical resonance in the sense of a great transcendence. There are empirical studies with qualitive-reconstructive methodology. Kerstin Menzel's qualitative-reconstructive research among local pastors in rural areas in Eastern Germany describes what she calls "context-oriented professional practice as a characteristic of public ministry" (Menzel 2021, p. 71). Referring to local annual village festivals, she shows that by participating in these events pastors are allowed to find out about the developments within the region and local community. They participate in a flow of information and networking with other social agents (cf. Menzel 2021, p. 64). It is a prerequisite, however, to stay away from proselytizing. Menzel suggests the following strategy, "having instruments and the skill to perceive the situation in a specific context, being able to relativize own ideals of being Christian and having a wide and multidimensional understanding of religion and Christian community" (Menzel 2021, p. 65).

This approach exemplifies the concept of public theology and "public liturgy" as liturgy in the public. Isolde Karle points to church as intermediate institutions creating spaces for socializing, for community life, diaconal support structures, and against isolation. Within a seemingly secularized society it is not only the socio-diaconal activity, but the religious narrative and the use of church music and traditional hymns that enable the church to reach beyond its borders (cf. Karle 2024). A marksmen's festival, just like commemorative services after catastrophic or tragic events, is an opportunity to reflect on "*religious speech in a secular context*, about accessibility and the ambivalent position of Christian messages in regard to the values of society" (Menzel 2021, p. 70). Research in theological disciplines, humanities and social science can be of use for Practical Theology (see e.g., Albrecht who argues for reflective and differentiated use of social science to explore the protestant liturgy and the genuine of the church service, cf. Albrecht 2000, pp. 383–84)—not only to understand secular festivals but maybe to understand Christianity's own festivals as well. Wolfgang Huber, former president of the Council of the Protestant Churches in Germany (EKD), takes it a step further by reflecting on the role of the churches within society: "The role of the churches [and their] contribution is not limited to [..] tasks [. . .] in the context of voluntary welfare. It also has its place where the churches make a contribution to prevent the willingness to show solidarity from eroding and maintain god-open humanity's ["gottoffene Humanität"] place in society" (Huber 2000, translated).

From the point of view of heortology and the theory of occasional services, it should be noted that a worship service at non-religious festivals is not a matter of crisis rituals in which contingencies are dealt with, nor is it a matter of accompanying individuals

or communities in threshold situations. The focus is on stabilizing *communities of values, expressions of joie de vivre and shared life*. In this sense, they are a contribution to an *ethics* of celebration.

5. Conclusions

Every researcher of festivals, including those in theology, knows the *meaning* of a festival. He or she always wants to explore the festival anew using different methodological approaches. He or she also focuses on the human being, i.e., *anthropological conditions*, as well as questions of sociality. Theologians need not only rely on their own discipline—they should rather integrate anthropological and sociological findings. There are also concepts from the humanities that have already explored the *nature* of the festival in depth. New cross-disciplinary knowledge and methodological approaches can sharpen the theological concept of celebration. When Harvey Cox, for example, refers to the *fantasy* and mentions it in the same context as celebration and festivity, it makes sense to work with newer approaches to *imaginative* and *image theory* nowadays (this is what author 1 will do in the systematic theological postdoctoral project).

Every researcher of festivals who has recognized the meaning of the festival is therefore alarmed when the festival is threatened—because it is no longer a *true* festival. When *communities of values, expressions of joie de vivre and shared life* (see above) are not recognizable, the break that a festival can cause is not salutary. Considerations of festival theory can be a contribution to ethics, just as a festival can lack morality: This must always be determined anew within the needs of the human community and the individual. However, we also keep in mind that festivals were used to manipulate people and build a community following false and unhuman purposes like in Nazi festivities (cf. Bastian 1993, pp. 27–30). The festival is threatened if its purpose, which is *to teach people to be human*, is not apparent. The church and theological representatives must take this concern into account and get involved here. The former pastoral care officer of the North Church (=Nordkirche), Sebastian Borck, once put it very aptly: "Church action is not there for the church, but for being human as a Christian in the world" (Borck 2016, p. 133, translated). If we apply this to what we wanted to consider in this contribution, we can say that an *ecclesial, theologically informed contribution to festival culture endeavours to open up space for the possibilities of being human as a Christian—in and with the festival.*

We would like to end with 10 theses:

1. The festival has evidently always been a relevant subject of theological research, because the Christian congregation unites people under the blessing of God in the mode of celebration in its worship services and ceremonies to accompany life situations. Theologians should examine other, e.g., secular festivals as well, and explore their significance.
2. This means that an *intense examination* is also more than a form of respect: "I am dealing with *your* festive culture" means that the church and individual theologians are also concerned with what constitutes and holds together this community and what is relevant for this specific group, what supports and holds it together, what keeps the celebrating community occupied. The church does not have to "incorporate" the community. They can celebrate together.
3. The categorization of different forms of festival culture must be *informed*. This can certainly be presupposed. The theologian will also find "material" and his or her own methodological approach, in our case as layered account, combining autoethnographical methodology with historical and theoretical reflection to ground their theory on their own practice: They can deal with the historical background of a specific type

of festival for instance or they can place it in the wider horizon of what they—as theologians—understand as the "nature" or the "essence of the festival".

4. Festival research can be undertaken in interdisciplinary fashion. This is of inestimable value: the theologian should make productive use of the results and interpretations of other disciplines, e.g., the empirical surveys, historical interpretations, and humanistic attempts to define concepts.
5. Theological practitioners should be familiar with this question: "What is *my role in this setting*?" We encourage a profound reflection on one's own perceptions of an "invitation", which allows one to question one's own resentments but should not eliminate critical reflection.
6. This also leads to the question of *morality*, and we argue for a sensitive approach to morality. No "moral preaching" should be considered, but rather *a sensitization to ethical issues* that are also relevant to society as a whole.
7. However, one should ask if there is a danger that the festival can produce undesirable outcomes (e.g., if a festival is directed against someone other than one's own community like racist ideas, homophobia etc.). Criticism is then appropriate on the part of the church and public theology etc.
8. The invitation to a non-church festival opens *opportunities for the church in the public sphere*: it can make theology think about what sustains and holds the Christian community together. There will be similarities (such as the values of marksmen and the Ten Commandments) and differences, but these can be also enriching.
9. In terms of practical theology, the church also *offers a special space for reflection* with its liturgical possibilities, its rituals, and its specific *language* shaped by the Bible.
10. A festival can be a salutary interruption, whether it reveals something other than everyday life, or gives even a glimpse of a transcendent reality.

It began with an invitation for a theologian to participate in a secular festival. It became a theologian's invitation to the celebrants to participate to this religious reality. In the end it was a reciprocal process of momentarily sharing a festive reality of values and community, joy and celebration.

Author Contributions: Conceptualization: S.J.I.-B. and T.R.; writing—original draft preparation: S.J.I.-B. and T.R.; writing—review and editing: T.R. and S.J.I.-B. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Data Availability Statement: Data are contained within the article.

Conflicts of Interest: The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

References

Albrecht, Christian. 2000. Sinnvergewisserung im Distanzgewinn: Liturgische Erwägungen über das Wesen des evangelischen Gottesdienstes zwischen Feier und Fest. *Zeitschrift für Theologie und Kirche* 97: 362–84.

Arnold, Jochen. 2006. Multireligiöse und interreligiöse Feiern. Eine phänomenologische und theologische Betrachtung. *Loccumer Pelikan. Religionspädagogisches Magazin für Schule und Gemeinde* 2: 53–60. Available online: https://www.rpi-loccum.de/damfiles/default/rpi_loccum/Materialpool/Pelikan/Pelikanhefte/pelikan2_06-2462c796111bdb77439b72fc74c64ca0.pdf (accessed on 30 January 2025).

Arnold, Jochen, Eckhard Gorka, Michael Meyer-Blanck, and Frank Peters, eds. 2018. *Öffentliche Liturgien: Gottesdienste und Rituale im Gesellschaftlichen Kontext*. Gemeinsam Gottesdienst gestalten 30. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt.

Assmann, Jan. 1991. Die Katastrophe des Vergessens. Das Deuteronomium als Paradigma kultureller Mnemotechnik. In *Mnemosyne. Formen und Funktionen der kulturellen Erinnerung*. Edited by Aleida Assmann and Dietrich Harth. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, pp. 337–55.

Bastian, Hans-Dieter. 1993. Kampf um die Feste–Kampf um die Köpfe. Eine Skizze der politischen Religion der Neuzeit. In *"... in der Schar derer, die da feiern". Feste als Gegenstand praktisch-theologischer Reflexion*. Edited by Peter Cornehl, Martin Dutzmann and Andreas Strauch. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, pp. 15–32.

Borck, Sebastian. 2016. *"Gottes kräftiger Anspruch auf unser ganzes Leben". Die Kirche und ihre Dienste und Werke in den Herausforderungen der Gesellschaft*. Kiel: Lutherische Verlagsanstalt.

Peter Cornehl, Dutzmann Martin, and Strauch Andreas, eds. 1993. Vorwort. In *"... in der Schar derer, die da feiern". Feste als Gegenstand Praktisch-Theologischer Reflexion*. Peter Cornehl, Dutzmann Martin, and Strauch Andreas, eds. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, pp. 7–10.

Cox, Havey. 1969. *The Feast of Fools. A Theological Essay on Festivity and Fantasy*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Deutschlandfunk. 2024. Available online: https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/frauen-demonstrieren-auf-borkum-fuer-umstrittenen-bisher-weitgehend-geheimen-klaasohm-brauch-100.html (accessed on 31 January 2025).

Ellis, Carolyn, Tony E. Adams, and Arthur P. Bochner. 2011. Autoethnography: An Overview. *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung* 36: 273–90.

Felsch, Dorit. 2011. *Die Feste im Johannesevangelium. Jüdische Tradition und christologische Deutung*. Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 2. Reihe 308. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck.

Freud, Sigmund. 1948. Totem und Tabu. In *Gesammelte Werke*. London: Imago Publishing Co, vol. 9. First printed in 1940. Reprinted in 1948. First published 1913.

Haug, Walter, and Rainer Warning, eds. 1989. *Das Fest*. Poetik und Hermeneutik XIV. München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag.

Heft, Hendrik. 2016. Das Schützenwesen. In *Westfälische Erinnerungsorte. Beiträge zum kollektiven Gedächtnis einer Region*. Edited by Lena Krull. Paderborn: Brill Schöningh, pp. 395–408. [CrossRef]

Hiller, Detlef, and Daniel Straß, eds. 2023. *Morphologie der Übermoral. Zum Moralismus in gesellschaftlichen und theologischen Debatten*. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt.

Huber, Wolfgang. 2000. Die Rolle der Kirchen als intermediärer Institutionen in der Gesellschaft. September 14. Available online: https://www.ekd.de/die-rolle-der-kirchen-als-intermediaerer-institutionen-in-der-gesellschaft-45358.htm (accessed on 20 February 2025).

Häusler, Michael, and Hans-Jürgen Benedict. 2010. Vereinswesen/Kirchliche Vereine. In *Theologische Realenzyklopädie: TRE*. Berlin: De Gruyter, vol. 34. [CrossRef]

Höhne, Florian. 2020. *Öffentliche Theologie. Begriffsgeschichte und Grundfragen*. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt.

Karle, Isolde. 2024. Religion am Ende? Praktisch-theologische Anmerkungen zur sechsten Kirchenmitgliedschaftsuntersuchung. *Deutsches Pfarrerblatt* 124: 591–96.

Kerényi, Karl. 1938. Vom Wesen des Festes. Antike Religion und ethologische Religionsforschung. In *Paideuma: Mitteilungen zur Kulturkunde*. Frankfurt am Main: Frobenius Institute, vol. 1, pp. 59–74.

Krause, Katharina, Manuel Stetter, and Birgit Weyel, eds. 2022. *Kasualien als Familienfeste. Familienkonstitution durch Ritualpraxis*. Praktische Theologie heute 186. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Kreyenschulte, Sebastian. 2017. Genese und Entwicklung des Schützenwesens im Nordmünsterland. In *Nordmünsterland. Forschungen und Funde*. Edited by Forschungsgemeinschaft zur Geschichte des Nordmünsterlandes e.V. Lage: Lippe Verlag, pp. 137–95.

Körtner, Ulrich H. J., Reiner Anselm, and Christian Albrecht, eds. 2020. *Konzepte und Räume Öffentlicher Theologie. Wissenschaft–Kirche–Diakonie*. Öffentliche Theologie 39. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt.

Kühn, Jakob, and Thomas Klie, eds. 2023. *Kasualdinge. Anmutung und Logik kirchlicher Gegenstände*. Praktische Theologie heute 185. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Lathrop, Gordon W. 1998. *Holy Things. A Liturgical Theology*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press.

Liturgische Konferenz, ed. 2006. *Mit Anderen feiern–gemeinsam Gottes Nähe suchen. Eine Orientierungshilfe der Liturgischen Konferenz für christliche Gemeinden zur Gestaltung von Feiern mit Menschen, die keiner christlichen Kirche angehören*. Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus.

Martin, Gerhard M. 1973. *Fest und Alltag: Bausteine zu einer Theorie des Festes*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Maurer, Michael, ed. 2004. *Das Fest. Beiträge zu seiner Theorie und Systematik*. Köln, Weimar and Wien: Böhlau.

Med Uni Graz. 2024. Available online: https://www.medunigraz.at/news/detail/krampustag-zwischen-kritik-und-tradition (accessed on 31 January 2025).

Menzel, Kerstin. 2021. Contributing to Local and Civil Society: Explorations for a Context-Sensitive and Public Character of Pastoral Ministry. In *Religion, Citizenship and Democracy*. Edited by Alexander Unser. Cham: Springer Nature, pp. 55–74.

Neuhäuser, Christian, and Christian Seidel, eds. 2020. *Kritik des Moralismus*. Berlin: Suhrkamp.

Noß-Kolbe, Peter. 2018. Voll ins Schwarze. Ökumenischer Gottesdienst zur Eröffnung des Schützenfestes Hildesheim, Johanni 2026. In *Öffentliche Liturgien: Gottesdienste und Rituale im Gesellschaftlichen Kontext*. Edited by Jochen Arnold, Eckhard Gorka, Michael Meyer-Blanck and Frank Peters. Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, pp. 31–34.

Pesonen, Heikki, Miira Niska, and Kari Mikko Vesala. 2018. The Societal Role of Fvangelical Lutheran Parishes in Rural Finland: A Qualitative Approach to Local Attitudes. *Rural Theology* 11: 68–82. [CrossRef]

Pieper, Josef. 2012. *Zustimmung zur Welt. Eine Theorie des Festes*. Kevelaer: Verlagsgemeinschaft topos plus. First published 1963.
Richter, Clas Oliver. 2019. Estland: Aus Pflichtgefühl fürs Vaterland–die Bürgerwehr Kaitseliit. Available online: https://www.daserste.de/information/politik-weltgeschehen/weltspiegel/estland-100.html (accessed on 25 January 2025).
Rosa, Hartmut. 2019. *Resonanz. Eine Soziologie der Weltbeziehung*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp.
Süddeutsche Zeitung. 2024. Available online: https://www.sueddeutsche.de/bayern/tradition-auf-nordseeinsel-klaasohm-ohne-pruegel-borkumer-feiern-umstrittenen-brauch-dpa.urn-newsml-dpa-com-20090101-241205-930-308874?print=true (accessed on 31 January 2025).
Turner, Victor. 1969. *The Ritual Process. Structure and Anti-Structure*. New Brunswick and London: Aldine Transaction.
UNESCO. n.d. Deutsche UNESCO-Kommission. Available online: https://www.unesco.de/staette/schuetzenwesen-in-deutschland/ (accessed on 25 January 2025).
van Gennep, Arnold. 2005. *Übergangsriten (Les rites de passage)*. Frankfurt am Main and New York: Campus Verlag. First published 1909.
Wagner-Rau, Ulrike, and Emilia Handke, eds. 2019. *Provozierte Kasualpraxis: Rituale in Bewegung*. Praktische Theologie heute 166. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

Disclaimer/Publisher's Note: The statements, opinions and data contained in all publications are solely those of the individual author(s) and contributor(s) and not of MDPI and/or the editor(s). MDPI and/or the editor(s) disclaim responsibility for any injury to people or property resulting from any ideas, methods, instructions or products referred to in the content.