The Concepts of Historical Costume Reenactment

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Abstract. Historical costume reenactment is one of the most effective methods for studying and reproducing a fragmentary field of human activity in the past and it is done in many ways and forms. Up to date a unified system of all the variety of methods and practical approaches to study and classify forms, typologies, materials, manufacturing techniques of the costumes has not been created. The article describes the concepts and analyses systematic approaches which allow to aggregate data of interdisciplinary researches according to unique features of the reenactment event, the form of museum exhibiting and by parameters of the archaeological experiment. The results of this study can be used in scientific and design activities of specialists engaged in the field of museums exhibitions, amateur reenacting and the event industry.

1. Introduction

Historical reenactment as the one of the applied approaches of History studying is a comprehensive method of cognition accumulating other methods of research to reproduce most fully and accurately an object, a phenomenon or an event of the past and simultaneously the representation of historical and cultural reality as well [1].

Material culture is the most reliable evidence of the epoch. Objects created by people for their practical needs provide unlimited opportunities for studying the science and technology achievements at every stage of the historical process. The anthropological context of the study of the subject environment places emphasis on the spiritual paradigm of certain communities of people, revealing their worldviews, religious beliefs, moral and ethical standards, and aesthetic preferences. The thing`s world in all civilizations wasn`t limited to utilitarian value. It always contained sacred meanings [2]. Therefore, historical reenactment is an effective tool for studying the material and spiritual evolution of mankind.

A costume occupies a special place in a subject-material environment being a phenomenon that combines two entities: the one hand it is a protective shell. A carrier of cultural tradition the other hand. Therefore the relevance of reconstructing object systems, including a clothes, armor, weapons and household accessories of human life, does not lose in the age of high technology. An important factor is maximum reliability and proximity to the historical prototype, both in terms of formal features and production technologies.
2. Historical reconstruction and reenactment as an object of multidisciplinary research

The term historical reenactment is defined as theoretical or practical reconstruction of external appearance and design of the object and also as a field of science and culture which allows reenacting and reproducing any area of human activity as a whole according to information available from various sources. This area takes social relations, culture, traditions and spiritual state reproduced as close as possible to the original. It makes possible for an observer to assess the reenacted culture.

This complex and multifaceted phenomenon is studied by a variety of scientific approaches and arises great interest in many researchers. Reenactment is the subject of study by specialists in various fields of knowledge such as Culturology, History, Archeology, Art History, Sociology, etc.

Similar studies have lack of concepts that consider the significance of historical reenactment like a modern socio-cultural phenomenon of applied activity with variety of methods and approaches. Also historical reenactment possesses the specific features both as a method and result of research.

3. The phenomenon of costume in the context of historical reenactment

The term of costume is multifaceted and diverse. Costume is both the result of human activity and the means of its implementation. So the complex of costume and accessories can manifest itself in various roles in scientific theories acting either as an object of analysis or as an existential concept [3].

The phenomenon of a historical costume dissolves in a vast sociocultural and artistic context retaining constant characteristics. This fact allows discussing not only the historical variability of the costume complex but also the phenomenon meaning in general term peculiar metaphysics of the costume. Such research facility assumes the synthesis of various historical ideas about the phenomenon of costume from the art history, experimental archeology, ethnography, anthropology and other scientific disciplines, including the reenactment of historical costume as a scientific method.

The concept of a reenacted complex of costume and armoury includes a variety of items: costume elements, accessories, shoes, weapons, armor and household objects used by the participant of the reenactment event to recreate the image of a certain chronological period in a specific region.

The basic method of scientific research of a costume complex in historical reenactment is a comparative analysis of various sources. The main aim is to find a correspondence between the archeological artifact and the narrative data and the visual sources and provide the most complete picture of the reenacting object. Conclusions made by one type of historical source are unreliable. If reenactment is confirmed by several types of sources it is the most adequate and veracious.

The primary task of the costume historical reenactment as an applied science activity is wearing costume for confirming or refuting scientific hypotheses. Experimental method allows doing it by simulating the processes of manufacturing and wearing a costume close to natural and historically reliable way. Thus, the problems of costume reenactment are far beyond the interests of historians, archeologists and professionals engaged in the field of museum exhibitions only but acquire a universal cultural significance.

4. A variety of approaches to the historical reenactment of costume-subject complexes

The possibility of experimenting in a historical studying is limited due to specificity and fragmentation of the sources. The degree of reliability of scientific reenactment increases with complexity of the source base. The most effective experimental methods are applicable in the reenactment of historical life and technology. These areas are reflected not only in narrative and visual sources, but represented directly by archeological artifacts as well [4]. The immaterial sphere of ethical-social interactions remains outside the scientific experiment and historical reenacting. Recreating such systems and connections seems unattainable because of a different type of mentality determined by the conditions of a particular historical epoch. These characteristics were described in detail.

1. It is difficult to ensure the lack of interaction with modern civilization in the process of experiment. Participants are bearers of civilization culture themselves [5]. Achieving the cleansing of modern consciousness from the modern attitudes to a level corresponding to the historical conditions for the experiment is not achievable because of the temporary limited nature of the experiment.
2. Lack of a methodological system that ensures the conduct of an experiment and a description of results, entailing a multitude of terminological and methodological problems such as difficulties with the definition of the term scientific historical reenactment in particular.

Therefore historical reenactment as a method of historical research is not fully tested by modern Russian science. Experimental methods exist in the form the living history in the foreign historical science at present moment. It unites not only a network of museums and research institutes but events aimed at demonstrating scientific reenactments of a particular epoch. Historical experiments exist at the following levels in Russia: scientific reenactment events performed by historians-theoreticians, experimental archeology, amateur reenactments [6].

The fundamental motivation in amateur historical reenactment like a form of leisure and social movements is a special type of social interaction in informal communication. Such interaction is one of the most important factors generating new social and material-technological reality. The meaning of the activities of reenactment as a form of leisure is concluded in the complex reenactment of the objects of the material culture of the past. Costume as reflection of a historical epoch is primarily fundamental for implementation of the event idea. Historical reenactment is a movement and a community of people that sets scientific targets and uses the method of role play and scientific experiment to solve problems and study the issue more deeply [7]. The main mass events like the bearers of the idea named the festivals in Russia and the other countries and sometimes it allows such an experiment to be conducted in specially created conditions of varying authenticity, reliability and proximity to the circumstances of the studying period.

The main way of the costume complex in social movement of historical reenactment is the role of a social multiplier. This is the material way of reproduction and spreading information on which the form of the social translator depends. The transmitters of informal communities and social movements as expanding and development organizational forms serve as the basis for special social connections and the emergence of new interactive artistic types [8]. The costume playing a role of the social multiplier of the informal community is also responsible for the basic parameter of the socio-technical form such as openness of community. The set of conventions inherent in subcultures like an appearance, slang, standards of behavior makes the costume one of the main internal and external identification markers.

One of the main goals of this paper was to amylase a lack of concepts that consider significance and methods of historical reenactment. Also the previous studies have not examined the specific features of reenactment both as a method and result of research.

Thus, the nature of the reenactment depends on the degree of preservation of artifacts, the quantity and quality of additional sources, as well as on the goals and tasks assigned to the author. In this regard, it seems possible to use the rationale for the three types of costume reenactment proposed by Z.V. Dode in the work Costume of the population of the North Caucasus VII-XVII centuries (Reenactment of ethno social history):

Authentic reenactment is completely based on the original artifacts that allow recreating the cut of clothes, its spatial form, manner of wearing, complex of decoration. The constitutional characteristics of an individual are taken into account while reproducing the form of a costume. Graphic reenactment is performed taking into account the proportional ratio of anthropological data and clothing sizes. The authentic reenactment involves the reproduction of an authentic ornament and coloring of tissues. We receive a reenactment of the original costume in graphic form as a result.

Generalizing reenactment is used in the case when it is necessary to make an image of a suit according to its remains from different complexes. The truth of the reenactment was checked by means of pictorial and written sources. Generalizing reenactment represents not a specific archaeologcal complex, but a cultural form that characterizes a certain historical and cultural space.

Hypothetical reenactment is used in those cases when there are only some elements of the complex and there is no possibility to restore the system-forming basis of the costume — clothes, head dress or shoes. [9] The model in this case is built on the basis of reasonable assumptions. [10] The hypothetical
type is most applicable to those epochs for which there are not or insufficient iconographic and ethnological sources.

5. Features of the costume reconstruction in the public military-historical movement

Because of the extreme rarity of authentic reenactment each experience of recreation has a subjective nature of author's interpretation. Therefore, the costume as a result of historical knowledge needs the appropriate criticism for authenticity and integrity of the complex, the identification of missing or inadequate elements, inauthentic interpolations and tendentious versions [10].

The difference in tasks and concepts and, accordingly, in the approaches between reenactment as a social movement and similar activities in museum sphere and in cinematography have to be mentioned. The specificity of reenacting in the military historical movement is that the participants use reenacted clothing, accessories and household things for their intended purpose [9], which is reflected in following features of the items.

Firstly, it is complexity. Recreating the appearance of a representative of the past it is impossible to confine to one or several objects of a costume or uniform. Therefore it is necessary to recreate the whole complex: from footwear and textiles to small and tiny functional accessories and weapons. The outer clothing or some parts of the equipment can be represented as a reflection of the epoch in the museum exposition only, often existing independently of each other but the use of individual parts of the costume complex is unacceptable in the historical reenactment.

Secondly, the peculiarity of such reenactments is deliberately expressed practicality which is governed by the same need to wear a reenacted costume complex and use the items according to the purpose. Manufactured clothing elements needed to be made regarding to the size of a particular owner, sometimes with distorting the true proportions of the original object within the permissible limits [11]. All reenacted items must be fully functional and applicable for their intended purpose. The comfort of their use is verified in practice which adds the credibility to the result of the research.

Thirdly, the historical reenactment in the context of applied activity is distinguished by the desire for authenticity, adequacy and confirmation of hypotheses.

The conceptual approach to recreating the costume complex depends on the specifics of the reenactment and format of the event, if we consider the historical reenactment as a form of informal leisure and social movement or as the form of exhibiting in the museum sphere or by parameters of the archaeological experiment in case of applied experimental history.

6. Conclusion

The development of concepts for the reenactment of a costume complex implies a systematic analysis of approaches from the point of view of functional tasks the cultural and social significance of historical reenactment. The goal defined by the concept determines the level of reenactment, and the truth of the concrete statement is clarified on the basis of a sufficiently, which helps to remove a lot of acute questions concerning the notorious historicity of the reenactment and the degree of authenticity of the costume complex.

Applied interdisciplinary research in the field of historical reenactment consists in the possibility of using the results in the practice of scientific, artistic and design activities of art historians, designers and artists engaged in the field of museums, entertainment and the event industries.

The practical significance of this study is determined by the possibility of using its results in the scientific and design activities of specialists involved in museum exhibitions, amateur reenactments and the event industry.

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