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Russian gold mining output in 1901-1917: the source study aspect

## Abstract

This paper explore the problem of gold mining output in Russian empire in 1901-1917 based on published and archival data. The aim of the present study was to clarify indicators of gold mining production, since in the leading studies various information is given, which is due to the peculiarities of metal accounting. For this purpose, published materials and archival documents of the State Institute for the design of enterprises of the gold and platinum industry of Glavzoloto of the People's Commissariat of Nonferrous Metallurgy («Giprozoloto»), prepared in 1944 in the form of a «Collection of Materials on the Gold Industry. 1493 - 1943», stored in the State Archive of the Magadan Region. Materials of the Institute «Giprozoloto» contain calculations of gold production in Russia and the USSR from 1745 to 1943, as well as technical and economic information on the country's gold mining industry at the beginning of the 20th century. Data shows that the gold mining indices in the scientific literature and sources are given according to

the data of gold log-books or gold-smelting laboratories. Gold log-books did not reflect the volumes of actual mining, as they showed only gold registered in the mines, in addition, some of the gold was withheld, and then came to the alloy in the laboratory. Accounting for metal according to gold-smelting laboratories showed higher and more accurate production figures, since it also reflected prospecting gold. However, as shown by the source study, gold production in 1901-1917 according to the Giprozoloto Institute (805.4 tons), and also according to the materials of L.B. Kafengauz (814.6 tons), are based on the data of gold-smelting laboratories and reflect volumes of uncleaned bullion gold entering in the gold-smelting laboratories. This changes the prevailing in historiography views on the volume of gold mining in Russia in this period. It should be noted, that according to calculations, the confirmed indicators of industrial production of chemically pure gold in Russia in 1901-1917 amounted to 682.5 tons of gold. The results indicate on the whole, that the expression of the final results of the gold industry of this period in the amount of chemically pure gold obtained in gold-smelting laboratories corresponds to the indices of the value of gold production used in analyzing the dynamics of the industry, and is correct when compared with the USSR gold-mining indices.

### Keywords

Source, gold, gold mining, gold log-books, gold-smelting laboratories, Russian Empire, Russia.

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