

The Coffee “Sniffers,” c. 1780 (1892)

Abstract

Starting in 1780, Frederick II commissioned retired soldiers to make sure that Prussians weren't drinking or roasting coffee illegally (i.e., by bypassing the state monopoly and the corresponding taxes). In the scene reproduced below, two official “sniffers” catch three innocent-looking women in the midst of a *Kaffeeklatsch*. The maidservant in the background looks on with seeming amusement, perhaps wondering if these uninvited guests will discover the coffee pot that one woman is hiding under the table.

Source



Source: Wood engraving after a painting by Louis Katzenstein, 1892.

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