

KONSTANTIN NIKOLAEVICH FILIPPOV

(1830 - Yalta, Crimea 1878)

Travellers in a Caucasian Landscape

signed 'C. Philippoff.' (lower right)
pencil and watercolour on paper
21.6 x 30.5 cm (8½ x 12 in)

A CHARMING TRAVELLING GROUP AMBLES SLOWLY through the dramatic Caucasian landscape, their livestock accompanying them on their journey and their belongings stowed in a wicker cart. At the front, a father and son sit together on a horse that moves elegantly forward; the young boy gazes at the viewer directly while clutching his father's waist for support and balance. Alongside two oxen are harnessed to a yoke: an amphora and flask are attached to the wooden reins connecting them to the cart, perhaps holding refreshment for a later rest in the long journey.

The roof of the cart is swathed in colourful red and blue fabrics which serve to emphasise the nomadic movement of this group. At the front of the cart, a young woman and small boy with bare, hanging legs sit jauntily. Walking alongside is a woman, perhaps the mother of the group; her head is covered in a black shawl and she carries a barely dressed small infant on her back. She appears to be struggling from their endeavour and her face is ruddy from exposure to the mountainous elements. To her right, another young boy, dressed in ragged clothing, raises a whip to the calf that walks in front of him. Both the boy and the pair riding at the front wear tall fur hats to keep them warm in the cold mountain air. Behind the travelling group, a dog follows loyally, though he too appears weary from the hard journey as his head is bowed and he is panting.

The bucolic serenity of the group in *Travellers in a Caucasian Landscape* is framed by the sweeping, snow-capped mountains that appear faintly in the background. Konstantin Nikolaevich Filippov has used a subdued palette to give the impression of the extensive mountain range, and the sun is shown subtly radiating off the white peaks in the distant background.

Filippov was a painter of battle-pieces and genre scenes. From 1850 to 1858 he studied at the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts in St. Petersburg



Konstantin Nikolaevich Filippov, *Travellers in a Caucasian Landscape*
(Detail)

where he worked in the studio of the historical painter Bogdan Pavlovich Villevalde (see inventory). He graduated from the Academy in 1858 and was sent to the Russian army to work as an official war artist depicting scenes from the Crimean War. He lived and worked in Warsaw, Rome and Paris before returning to Russia in 1863. He was appointed the title of Academician for the large-scale painting *Flight of the Bulgarians from the Danube River with Retreat of Russian Army from Silistria* in 1865. The artist spent the remainder of his life in Southern Crimea.

