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Chercheur de Lumière: The Art of Jean-Louis Roumégère (1863-1925)

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Chercheur de Lumière: The Art of Jean-Louis Rouméguère (1863-1925)

Elizabeth Ann Wheeler

**Thesis submitted
to the College of Creative Arts
at West Virginia University**

in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of

**Master of Arts in
Art History**

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Janet Snyder, Ph. D.
Kristina Olson, MA**

Department of Art History

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**Keywords: painting, landscape, France, Pyrenees, nineteenth century, twentieth century,
regionalism, somatic, Barbizon, Impressionism
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ABSTRACT

Chercheur de Lumière: The Art of Jean-Louis Rouméguère (1863-1925)

Elizabeth Ann Wheeler

This thesis examines the landscape paintings of Jean-Louis Rouméguère (1863-1925), who was active in southwestern France in the early twentieth century. Rouméguère, who also had a brief Parisian career, was a fervently independent artist whose work nonetheless shows the varied influences of the Barbizon school, the Impressionist movement, and even classical landscape techniques. Working exclusively in the regions stretching from Auvergne to the Pyrenees, Rouméguère created atmospheric, somatically-appealing paintings that experimented with pushing small scale to an extreme. The artist's work demonstrates his quest to capture the intense, ever-shifting light of his region while maintaining a sense of harmony and *vérité*; ideas that culminated in his "Conférence sur une Tentative de Peinture Scientifique" presented and published in Paris in 1906, in which Rouméguère explained the key tenets of what can be described as a practical color theory. In his writing, Rouméguère revealed both the methodology that guided his work and the depth of feeling that inspired it, a combination which allowed him to strike a delicate balance between "science" and poetry in his rendering of the fields and forests of the Gersois countryside, Auvergne in the Massif Central, and especially the crags and peaks of the Pyrenees.

Today, Rouméguère is virtually unknown outside of his hometown of Auch, where over three hundred of his paintings are held in the collection of the *Musée des Jacobins*. Through research conducted at the museum and in regional and national archives, this thesis restores the artist's historical reputation as a significant painter of his region who adroitly captured not only the landscape but the atmosphere of France's southwest, illuminating by extension the rich and understudied contributions of various artists and movements of this region.

DEDICATION

To my mom and dad, Debbie and Lee Wheeler, with my deepest gratitude for the example you continue to set for me, the faith you instilled in me, and your unconditional love and unwavering support in whatever endeavor I undertake. I love you so much and owe you more than I could ever repay.

To Chuck and Marie Olson, for showing me a bigger and more beautiful world and for nurturing my love of art and of the French language. When our paths crossed, mine changed—I will always be grateful to you for the tutelage that laid the foundation for this and many other adventures.

Finally, to Mme. Boyer. Thank you for treasuring the works of Jean-Louis Rouméguère for all of these years, and for so generously welcoming me into your home and sharing them with me. I am so very glad to have met you, and I hope that you will find this study a fitting tribute to M. Rouméguère.

Romans 11:36

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Many thanks, also, to the staff of the *Musée des Jacobins* in Auch, particularly M. Fabien Ferrer-Joly (Conservation) and Mme. Laetitia Leininger (Documentation Service), for allowing me access to the paintings and documents within the museum's collection. Thank you, also, to M. Thierry Sovran (Supervisor) for help in moving and unwrapping artwork, as well as to Mme. Sophie Forquet for sharing her office space—and enthusiasm! I greatly appreciate the time that the staff took to pull so many paintings from storage so that I could study and photograph them. This project would not have been possible without their support.

Much gratitude as well to Mme. Madeleine Boyer, step-great-granddaughter of Jean-Louis Rouméguère and her grandson, M. Mory Jambu, for responding to my letter and permitting me to come and view additional documentation, drawings, and paintings. Meeting someone with a personal connection to Rouméguère was invaluable to the completion of this thesis.

I would also like to thank Dr. Twyla Meding for her assistance in writing to the *Musée des Jacobins*, Prof. Naijun Zhang for discussing Rouméguère's work with me, and Beth Royall for sharing her research expertise.

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LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Paris Metro Card Series by J.-L. Roumégère, c. 1913.....	112
Figure 2: Paris Metro Card Series (detail) by J.-L. Roumégère, c. 1913.....	112
Figure 3: Paris Metro Card Series (detail) by J.-L. Roumégère, c. 1913.....	113
Figure 4: J.-L. Roumégère in his studio.....	113
Figure 5: <i>Phases of Light (Phases de la Lumière)</i> by J.-L. Roumégère, c. 1905.....	114
Figure 6: <i>Phases of Light: No. 1, Dawn (Phases de la Lumière, No. 1: Aube)</i> by J.-L. Roumégère, c. 1905.....	114
Figure 7: <i>Morning</i> by Vittore Grubicy di Dragon, n.d.....	115
Figure 8: <i>View of Dinant (Vue de Dinant)</i> , by Hippolyte Boulenger, 1870.....	115
Figure 9: J.-L. Roumégère's "Pocket box".....	116
Figure 10: <i>Autumn Sky in the Mountains (Ciel d'Automne en Montagne)</i> by J.-L. Roumégère, n.d.....	116
Figure 11: <i>The Conflagration (L'Incendie)</i> by J.-L. Roumégère, c. 1909.....	117
Figure 12: <i>Effect of Morning in the Mountains (Effet du Matin dans les Montagnes)</i> by J.-L. Roumégère, before 1906.....	117
Figure 13: <i>States of the Full Moon: The Twilight Glow (Etats de la Pleine Lune: Aux Lueurs Crépusculaires)</i> by J.-L. Roumégère, before 1906.....	118
Figure 14: <i>States of the Full Moon: At Nightfall (Etats de la Pleine Lune: A la Nuit Tombante)</i> by J.-L. Roumégère, before 1906.....	118
Figure 15: <i>States of the Full Moon: In the Middle of the Night (Etats de la Pleine Lune: En Plein Nuit)</i> by J.-L. Roumégère, before 1906.....	119
Figure 16: <i>States of the Full Moon: Reflections of the Dawn (Aux Reflets de l'Aurore)</i> by J.-L. Roumégère, before 1906.....	119
Figure 17: <i>Scales of Morning (Gammes du Matin)</i> by J.-L. Roumégère, c. 1913.....	120
Figure 18: <i>Morning Mists (Brume du Matin)</i> by J.-L. Roumégère, before 1906.....	120
Figure 19: <i>Morning Snow (Neige au Matin)</i> by J.-L. Roumégère, before 1906.....	121

Figure 20: <i>Snow in the First Rays of Light (Neige au Premiers Rayons)</i> by J.-L. Rouméguère, before 1906.....	121
Figure 21: Landscape by J.-L. Rouméguère, n.d.....	122
Figure 22: <i>Salon des Indépendants</i> ticket with sketch by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1914.....	122
Figure 23: <i>Exposition J.-L. Rouméguère</i> ticket with sketch by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1906.....	123
Figure 24: <i>Footbridge over the Gave (La Passerelle sur la Gave)</i> by Eugene Isabey, 1856.....	123
Figure 25: <i>Solitary Voyager in a Gorge (Voyageur Solitaire dans une Gorge)</i> by J.-L. Rouméguère, n.d.....	124
Figure 26: <i>Note de poche</i> by J.-L. Rouméguère, n.d.....	124
Figure 27: Tree study by J.-L. Rouméguère, n.d.....	125
Figure 28: <i>Spring Morning in the Gers (Matin de Printemps Gersoises)</i> by J.-L. Rouméguère, before 1906.....	125
Figure 29: <i>Phases of Light: No. 10, Night (Phases de la Lumière: No. 10, Nuit)</i> , by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1905.....	126
Figure 30: <i>Mountain Haze (Brumes en Montagne)</i> by J.-L. Rouméguère, n.d.....	126
Figure 31: <i>Landscape with Cattle at Limousin</i> by Jules Dupré, 1837.....	127
Figure 32: <i>Phases of Light: No. 7, Evening Sunlight (Phases de la Lumière: No. 7, Soleil du Soir)</i> by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1905.....	127
Figure 33: <i>Phases of Light: No. 7, Midday Sun (Phases de la Lumière: No. 7, Soleil du Midi)</i> by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1905.....	128
Figure 34: Studies for a Conference by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1906.....	128
Figure 35: <i>Phases of Light: No. 5, Morning Sunlight (Phases de la Lumière: No. 5, Soleil du Matin)</i> by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1905.....	129
Figure 36: Studies for a Conference by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1906.....	129
Figure 37: “Painting representing an isolated house in the country, situated in the center of the painting, behind an embankment planted with trees” by J.-L. Rouméguère, 1889.....	130

Figure 38: Landscape by J.-L. Rouméguère, before 1900.....	130
Figure 39: <i>Phases of Light: No. 8, Sunset (Phases de la Lumière: No. 7, Coucher du Soleil)</i> by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1905.....	131
Figure 40: <i>Landscape at Daybreak (Paysage au Lever du Jour)</i> by J.-L. Rouméguère, n.d.....	131
Figure 41: <i>London, Parlement. Sun Piercing through the Fog (Londres, le Parlement. Trouée de soleil dans le brouillard)</i> by Claude Monet, 1904.....	132
Figure 42: <i>Moonlight (Clair de Lune)</i> by J.-L. Rouméguère, n.d.....	132
Figure 43: <i>Note de poche</i> , signed and labeled “Indépendants 1911” on reverse, by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1911.....	133
Figure 44: <i>Note de poche</i> by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1911.....	133
Figure 45: Detail of <i>The Conflagration (L’Incendie)</i> by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1909.....	134
Figure 46: <i>Snow at Sunset (Neige au Coucher du Soleil)</i> by J.-L. Rouméguère, before 1906...	134
Figure 47: <i>Note de poche</i> sunsets by J.-L. Rouméguère, n.d.....	135
Figure 48: <i>Morning Light in the Valley (Soleil du Matin dans Vallée)</i> by J.-L. Rouméguère, n.d.....	135
Figure 49: <i>Before the Rain (Avant la Pluie)</i> by J.-L. Rouméguère, n.d.....	136
Figure 50: <i>Scales of Morning</i> , detail, by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1913.....	136
Figure 51: <i>Blazing Atmosphere in Winter (Embrasement de l’Atmosphère en Hiver)</i> , by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1908.....	137
Figure 52: <i>Symphony in Green (Symphonie en Vert)</i> by J.-L. Rouméguère, n.d.....	137
Figure 53: <i>Course of Water through the Woods (Cours de l’eau sous bois,)</i> by Consant Troyon, c. 1845.....	138
Figure 54: <i>Morning Calm, Forest Interior (Calme du Matin, Intérieur de Forêt)</i> by Paul Huet, c. 1852.....	138
Figure 55: <i>Water Lilies (Nénuphars)</i> by J.-L. Rouméguère, n.d.....	139
Figure 56: <i>Pyrenees Mountains in the Fog, Eaux-Bonnes (Montagnes des Pyrénées dans la brume, Eaux-Bonnes)</i> by Eugène Delacroix, 1845.....	139

Figure 57: <i>Herd of Sheep in the Pyrenees</i> by Rosa Bonheur, 1868.....	140
Figure 58: <i>Cascade of the Trou d'Enfer, Lys Valley (La Cascade du Trou d'Enfer dans la Vallée du Lys)</i> by Gustave Doré, 1882.....	140
Figure 59: <i>The Pyrenees, the Peak of the Midi de Bigorre</i> by Narcisse-Díaz de la Peña, 1871-72.....	141
Figure 60: <i>View of the Pic du Midi from Pau and the Gabas Forest, (Vue du Pic du Midi de Pau et de la Forêt de Gabas)</i> by Theodore Richard, 1835.....	141
Figure 61: <i>The Bear Hunt towards the Waterfall of Lake Oo (La Chasse à l'Ours vers la Cascade du Lac d'Oo)</i> by Louis-François LeJeune, 1834.....	142
Figure 62: <i>Landscape (Paysage)</i> by Léon Soulié, 1824-1862.....	142
Figure 63: <i>The Pic du Vignemale at Sunset (Le Pic du Vignemale au Couchant)</i> by Franz Schrader, c. 1900.....	143
Figure 64: <i>Landscape</i> by Louis Buffin, early 1900s.....	143

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iv
LIST OF FIGURES.....	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ix
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER I: The Life of Jean-Louis Rouméguère.....	11
CHAPTER II: Known Works and Documentation.....	21
Section A: The Rouméguère Collection at the <i>Musée des Jacobins</i> , Auch.....	21
Section B: Additional Works.....	26
Section C: Restoring Original Titles.....	28
CHAPTER III: A Painter of the Midi: Rouméguère's Southwestern Landscape.....	31
CHAPTER IV: Rouméguère's Technique.....	45
Section A: The Writings of J.-L. Rouméguère.....	45
Section B: Capturing an Atmosphere.....	64
Section C: The Significance of Scale.....	71
CHAPTER V: Contextualizing Rouméguère's Art.....	78
Section A: Contemporary Critical Responses.....	78
Section B: The Larger Context.....	97
CONCLUSION.....	109
FIGURES.....	112
APPENDIX I.....	144
APPENDIX II.....	151
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	152

INTRODUCTION

In a display case at the *Musée des Jacobins* in the small city of Auch in southwestern France are the trappings of an artist—a sketchbook, oil paints, a tiny wooden “pocket box” complete with miniature brushes, and a handful of small paintings.¹ Ten of these paintings, dating from about 1913, are framed together (figure 1). In one, a full moon flanked by glowing clouds rises over a still river lined by softly-lit trees, distant blue hills looming in the distance (figure 2). In another, a purple mountain is backlit by the brilliant red-gold glow of the sun, which seems to hover just out of sight behind the peak (figure 3). Lush green foliage in the middle ground catches the light, while a single shadowed tree leans over a winding path in the foreground. This sense of spatial depth and radiant atmospheric effect permeate all ten paintings, the grandeur of the artist’s chosen motifs belying his choice of miniscule support—Parisian metro tickets.²

The creator of this intriguing little series was Jean-Louis Rouméguère (1863-1925), an autodidactic landscape painter who was born and died in Auch (figure 4).³ In addition to the contents of the display case, nearly all of Rouméguère’s known works are held by the *Musée des Jacobins*, thanks to the efforts of Marcel Rouméguère (1896-1979), the artist’s only son, who in 1978 donated the contents of his father’s studio to the museum.⁴ This included more than 350

¹ At the time of writing (2019), the museum is currently undergoing extensive renovations. Descriptions of the permanent collection displays are as observed in March of 2018, prior to renovation.

² Each ticket is three by six cm—approximately the same size that they are today. Dimensions and other information about works of art is as listed in the Musée des Jacobin’s database, unless otherwise noted. Dates are rarely known; when possible, they have been approximated based on stylistic evaluation and/or the exhibition history of the painting, if known.

³ Odile Brel-Bordaz, “La Donation Rouméguère au Musée d’Auch: Le Peintre Jean-Louis Rouméguère (1863-1925),” *Bulletin de la Société Archéologique, Historique, Littéraire & Scientifique du Gers* (Auch: Imprimerie Th. Bouquet S.A., 1980): 77.

⁴ Brel-Bordaz, “La Donation Rouméguère,” 75.

paintings as well as documents and other effects, a few of which are on permanent display in the museum galleries amidst the work of other local artists.⁵

In the same room as the metro ticket series is another set of ten oil paintings presented together in an original, custom-built wooden frame, a small plaque at the top denoting them as the *Phases de la Lumière* (*Phases of Light*, c. 1905, figure 5). Significantly larger than the metro cards but still modest at twenty-seven by forty centimeters each, these landscapes depict the nearby Pyrenean mountains, each scene documenting the conditions of light at a specific moment of the day: dawn, aurora, sunrise, morning, morning light, mid-day light, evening light, sunset, twilight, and night.⁶ The handling of tones is delicate and exacting, the brushwork controlled but expressive. The first of the ten, for example, is a scene of high cliffs around a rocky *gave*—a rushing Pyrenean torrent (figure 6). Roumégère's understanding of light is on display in the subtle tones of the distant mountains bathed in a soft early-morning glow. The closer cliffs, to the left, are more loosely handled, the trees dabbed in with quick, dark strokes.

Roumégère considered the *Phases of Light* his masterpiece, and the completion of this series marked his late but triumphant debut as a regional artist and the beginning of his documented career.⁷ The paintings first went on display at the 1905 *Salon de l'Union Artistique* in Toulouse, where they were generally met with critical renown—with one exception, a brief and dismissive critique that prompted a heated written response from Roumégère in which he revealed both his own fiery personality and something of the theory behind his artistic vision: a method of working that was based not only on close observation of nature, but also on a system

⁵ Paintings and artifacts discussed are as recorded in the *Musée des Jacobins*' reference base and viewed by the author in March 2018.

⁶ Here and throughout, unless otherwise noted, translations are mine. Original French: Aube, Aurore, Lever du Soleil, Effet de Matin, Soleil du Matin, Soleil de Midi, Soleil de Soir, Coucher de Soleil, Crépuscule, Nuit.

⁷ Brel-Bordaz, "La Donation Roumégère," 78.

of principles and ideas that included what might be called a practical theory of color.⁸ The *Phases of Light*, then, were the tangible manifestation of years of work and research.

In 1906, following his success in Toulouse, Rouméguère embarked on a brief Parisian career that included his own solo show, the presentation and publication of his methodology in his “Conférence sur une Tentative de Peinture Scientifique” (1906) and a subsequent series of articles in the *Journal des Artistes* (1907), and his participation in the *Salon des Indépendants* from 1908 through 1913. Here, Rouméguère’s delicate, light-filled landscapes joined the works of such well-known artists as Marcel Duchamp (1887-1968), Wassily Kandinsky (1866-1944), and Paul Signac (1863-1935)—along with a myriad of others. In 1911, for example, the twenty-seventh *Salon des Indépendants* opened to the public with a staggering display of 6,745 works of art, including a series of Rouméguère’s miniature landscapes.⁹ Among the numerous artists who showed in the *Salon des Indépendants*, Rouméguère was one of the few whose work garnered annual mentions in the Parisian press—and one of the many who has now faded into near total obscurity.

Artists like Rouméguère hover on the fringes of history. Their works are held in the archives and galleries of private citizens and regional museums, the preservation of their oeuvres and their names dependent on the interest of a small town or even just a few individuals. Yet these artists often have much to offer the art historian. Analysis of the lives, works, and writings of such little-known artists can yield a more comprehensive interpretation of the issues and tendencies of their day, especially within lesser-studied regions, and, while probing these archives is unlikely to greatly disturb the larger art historical narrative, such studies may reveal a

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ “Le Salon des Indépendants,” *L’Echo de Paris*, May 1911.

forgotten minor artist, a fascinating personality, a novel approach, or a provincial master. Such is the case of Jean-Louis Rouméguère.¹⁰

Following the acquisition of Rouméguère's paintings and effects by the *Musée des Jacobins*, then-director Odile Brel-Bordaz published an article on the artist in the 1980 *Bulletin de la Société Archéologique, Historique, Littéraire & Scientifique du Gers*. This article, comprised of a brief biography and some analysis of the artist's painting style, is to date the most complete published examination of Rouméguère's life and work. Other mentions of the artist found in regional publications, such as his biographical entry in the *Société Archéologique's* publication *Les Gers: Dictionnaire Biographique de l'Antiquité à Nos Jours* (1999), draw directly from Brel-Bordaz's article.¹¹ Brel-Bordaz, in turn, heavily referenced an unpublished manuscript entitled "Notes Biographiques sur le Paysagiste Jean-Louis Rouméguère (1863-1925)," written and provided to the museum by Marcel Rouméguère.¹²

Marcel Rouméguère also re-typed and bound an extensive collection of critical reviews, *Appreciations dans la Presse sur les Œuvres de J.-L. Rouméguère* (n.d.), which allowed me to quickly locate specific articles. Additional critical reviews and information pertaining to the artist's life and career were examined within the collection of the *Musée des Jacobins*, the *Archives Départementales du Gers*, the *Archives Nationales de France*, and the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France*.

Also important to this study were several texts that Rouméguère had or may have had access to during his life. These include Michel Eugene Chevreul's *De la Loi du Contrast Simultané des Couleurs* (1839) and Ogden Rood's *Modern Chromatics* (1879), among the best-

¹⁰ Brel-Bordaz, "La Donation Rouméguère," 75.

¹¹ Georges Courtes, "Rouméguère, Jean-Louis," *Les Gers: Dictionnaire Biographique de l'Antiquité à Nos Jours* (Auch: Société Archéologique et Historique du Gers, 1999), 303.

¹² Marcel Rouméguère, "Notes Biographiques sur le paysagiste Jean-Louis Rouméguère (1863-1925)," unpublished.

known theories of color at the time.¹³ Fellow southwestern artist Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes' (1715-1819) *Elémens du Perspective Pratique* (1799), especially pertinent to this study, was a well-known guide for beginning artists, with a particular focus on landscape.¹⁴

Of the many other secondary texts used or considered in this study, two became particularly important. First, Claudia Einecke's dissertation, "Beyond Seeing: The Somatic Experience of Landscape Painting in Mid-Century France" (1994), describes a way of understanding landscape that goes beyond qualifications of rural or heroic, focusing instead on the sensations provoked by the artist's brushwork.¹⁵ Applied to Rouméguère's work, the concept of somatically-evocative painting allows a fuller interpretation of both the influences behind and appeal of the artist's work. Secondly, Marguerite Gaston's article *Les Peintres Toulousains et le Pyrénées à l'Époque Romantique* (1972) revealed the importance of the Pyrenees as a motif among southwestern artists, beginning in the early nineteenth century.¹⁶

Additional books that were useful in building background and contextual knowledge include Mark Roskill's *The Languages of Landscape* (1997), a scholarly discussion of the ways in which artists have understood and depicted landscape throughout the history of the genre, as well as Richard Thomson's *Framing France: The Representation of Landscape in France, 1870-1914* (1998), a compilation of essays addressing topics such as regionalism and specific artists'

¹³ M.E. Chevreul, *De la Loi du Contraste Simultané des Couleurs* (Paris: Pitois-Levrault et Co., 1839), and Ogden Rood, *Modern Chromatics* (New York: D. Appleby and Company, 1879). The French translation of Rood's work, *Théorie Scientifique des Couleurs*, was published in 1881.

¹⁴ Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes, *Éléments de Perspective Pratique* (Paris: Chez l'Auteur, 1800). Original version published 1799.

¹⁵ Claudia Einecke, "Beyond Seeing: The Somatic Experience of Landscape Painting in Mid-Nineteenth-Century France" (Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri, 1994).

¹⁶ Marguerite Gaston, "Les Peintres Toulousains et les Pyrénées à l'Epoque Romantique," *Annales du Midi: Revue Archéologique, Historique et Philologique de la France Méridionale* 84, n. 10 (1972): 271-282.

relationship to their homeland.¹⁷ Malcolm Andrews' *The Landscape and Western Art* (1999) served as an excellent general resource on the development of landscape in France and beyond during this time, while John Gage's *Color and Culture* (1993) provided a comprehensive overview of color theories and ideas pertaining to music and color.¹⁸

Finally, two exhibition guides: *Les Pyrénées Français Vues par les Artistes* from the 1974 exhibition at the *Musée Pyrénéen, Château-Fort de Lourdes* and *Les Pyrénées des Peintres: Gouffres, Chaos, Torrents et Cimes*, from the 2007-2008 exhibition at the *Musée Paul-Depuy*, contain brief biographies of some of the region's landscape painters as well as images of their work, allowing comparison with Rouméguère's paintings in both motif and style.¹⁹ I was also able to view the exhibition *Viver et Rever la Montagne*, on display at the *Musée Pyrénéen, Château-Fort de Lourdes* in 2018, which included works by southwestern artists.²⁰

This thesis aims to expand upon the analysis begun by art historian Odile Brel-Bordaz, taking into consideration the *Musée de Jacobins*' Rouméguère collection—including both the artist's visual and written works and other documentation concerning his life and career—as well as additional paintings and drawings within the private collection of Mme. Madeleine Boyer, step-great-granddaughter of the artist.

While a complete evaluation of each individual document or image remains beyond the scope of this project, this thesis will thoroughly examine those most relevant to reconstructing

¹⁷ Mark Roskill, *The Languages of Landscape* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997) and Richard Thomson, editor, *Framing France: The Representation of Landscape in France, 1870-1914* (New York: Manchester University Press, 1998).

¹⁸ Malcolm Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), and John Gage, *Color and Culture: Practice and Meaning from Antiquity to Abstraction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993).

¹⁹ Jean Robert, *Les Pyrénées Françaises Vues par les Artistes* (Lourdes: Musée Pyrénéen, 1974), and Jean Penent and Claire Dalzin, *Gouffres, chaos, torrents et cimes: Les Pyrénées des Peintres au XIXe Siècle: 18 octobre 2007—21 janvier 2008* (Toulouse: Privat, 2007).

²⁰ Exhibition, *Viver et Rever la Montagne: 15 Juin—16 September 2018*. Château Fort Musée Pyrénéen, Lourdes. Viewed June 2018.

and analyzing the methods and ideas of J.-L. Rouméguère and the historical context in which he lived and worked. Chapter I introduces Rouméguère biographically, as an acquaintance with the man is important to a fuller comprehension of the artist. Chapter II assesses in more detail the contents of the Rouméguère donation and significant works within this and Mme. Boyer's collection, then explains Rouméguère's numbering system that allows some of these images to reclaim their original titles and, consequently, their significance within his oeuvre. Chapter III establishes Rouméguère as a regional artist whose work is inseparable from the landscape and atmospheric conditions of France's southwest. Art historian Claudia Einecke's theory of somatic landscape is introduced as a framework by which Rouméguère's paintings may be better understood. Chapter IV considers Rouméguère's art and most significant writings in greater depth, including extensive formal analysis of some of Rouméguère's key artworks as well as consideration of the artist's penchant for working small and his emphasis on atmospheric effects. Finally, Chapter V further contextualizes the artist and his work, juxtaposing Rouméguère's methods and motifs with those of his contemporaries and of past artists and theorists, exploring perceptions of Rouméguère in his own time via articles in the contemporary press, examining possible influences, and placing the artist among the larger movements of his day and his region.

As the first extensive study of the life, paintings, and writings of J. -L. Rouméguère, this thesis follows the struggles and triumphs of this little-known artist and explores his significance as a provincial painter working outside and on the peripheries of the celebrated turn-of-the-century Parisian arts scene. Rouméguère, I will demonstrate, may be understood as an artist representative of his region: an artist who, albeit briefly, was once recognized as one of the leading landscape painters of the *Midi*. In relating the principles of somatic landscape paintings as described by Einecke, contemporary critical reviews, and the tenets of Rouméguère's method

to formal analysis of the artist's work, I will argue that Rouméguère's paintings incited—indeed, often still incite—a sensorial response in the viewer, thus evoking not just the geography of the southwestern region but also an experience of affect that the viewer intuitively attributes to the depicted place. It is for this reason that one critique does not simply say of Rouméguère, “he is Gascon,” but “he is Gascon and this is *felt*.”²¹

Essentially, Rouméguère is a particularly understudied artist within a persistently understudied region—though research concerning nineteenth- and twentieth-century Paris is justifiably abundant, the artists and artistic tendencies of more distant provinces have yet to be so thoroughly examined. English-language scholarship on Pyrenean and Gascon landscape artists is scant; even French-language resources are rather lacking. While a thorough examination of the history of landscape painting in southwestern France is beyond the scope of this thesis, a secondary aspiration is to explore, in order to better understand the context within which Rouméguère worked, the rich tradition of southwestern French landscape painting that may even predate that of the Barbizon school.²² Rouméguère was not the first, nor the last, artist to emerge from and be captivated by the *Midi*.

Still, among the painters of his region, Rouméguère remains unique—not only because of his distinctive method, ability to evoke a near-palpable sense of atmosphere, and refusal to associate himself with any particular group or movement, but also because of the existence of writings by the artist, such as his “Conférence.” These writings provide insight into

²¹ Les Quatre, “Société des Artistes Indépendants,” *L'Autorité*, April 22, 1911. Emphasis mine. Original French: Il est Gascon et cela se sent.

²² Beginning with Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes at the turn of the nineteenth century, the Pyrenees seem to have become an almost ubiquitous motif of the landscapists of southwestern France. Documentation of the many painters who chose the Pyrenees as their motif can be found in various catalogues of the *Salon des Indépendants*, museum exhibitions such as the recent *Viver et Rever la Montagne* (June 15-September 16, 2018) at the *Chateau-Fort Musée Pyrénéen*, Lourdes, and studies including Marguerite Gaston's “*Les Peintres Toulousains et les Pyrénées à l'Epoque Romantique*.”

Rouméguère's methods and processes of thought, allowing a more fully-developed analysis and interpretation of his paintings, including some specifically mentioned within his texts. While a portion of Rouméguère's work has been lost to time, the *Musée des Jacobins* is fortunate enough to house the majority of the most significant paintings of the artist's career—including the *Phases of Light* (image 6) and the metro ticket series (image 1).

The *Phases of Light* serve as a visual manifesto of the principles and methodology that defined Rouméguère's artistic maturity, as well as depicting one of the artist's most frequent motifs—the Pyrenees. This series marks the beginning of Rouméguère's documented career, while the metro ticket paintings of 1913 are among the last he completed before entirely abandoning Paris and his quest for artistic renown. The appeal of these late paintings seems largely a function of their extreme smallness and inherently paradoxical nature. Immediately evident is the issue of real versus perceived space: the viewer marvels at expansive vistas and majestic mountain peaks—at the sensation of depth and light—and how effortlessly these seem to have been captured within a few square centimeters. Less conspicuous, but as compelling, is the juxtaposition of quasi-classical imagery and techniques and an unusual, modern choice of support—the Parisian metro system, after all, was little over a decade old when these paintings were completed.²³ This vacillation between tradition and innovation carries through the artist's larger oeuvre, as Rouméguère continually sought to create paintings that read as both “true” and harmonious, that balanced “science” and poetry.

Hindered by a late debut, the coming of World War I, a rapidly-changing art world, and the artist's own poor health and often-difficult personality, Rouméguère's art and ideas never gained the following that he hoped, and by 1914 he had returned definitively to Auch and

²³ The Paris metro debuted in 1900.

virtually disappeared from the public eye. Still, J. -L. Rouméguère's methodology achieved a certain measure of success within his singular body of work. As an independent artist whose highly personal style nonetheless shows the influence of larger landscape movements within the south and France as a whole, Rouméguère's studied yet poetic depictions of provincial landscapes, particularly the peaks and valleys of Pyrenean mountains, demonstrate the artist's mastery of the myriad effects of France's vivid southwestern atmosphere—rendering his region as a fervent, lifelong “*chercheur de lumière*.”²⁴

²⁴ Meaning “seeker of light,” this epithet seems to have originated with critic Edmond Campagnac's 1910 article, “Salon des Indépendants: Chercheur de Lumière.” The clipping is in the collection of the Musée des Jacobins; publication unlisted. *Chercheur de Lumière* is also the subtitle of Rouméguère's display at the *Musée des Jacobins*.

CHAPTER I: The Life of Jean-Louis Rouméguère

Though many of the details of Jean-Louis Rouméguère's life have been lost to time, the available information is enough to provide some sense of the artist's personality and interests as well as the events of his life. As is true of most artists, the work that Rouméguère produced is inextricably linked to the life that he lived—to the land in which he was born and raised, the occupation for which he trained, and his singular and ardent character. Thus, this brief biography serves to introduce not only the man, but his art as well.

Rouméguère was born in Auch, capital of the Gers region, on June 28, 1863, the son of Jean-François Rouméguère and Etiennette Capdeville.²⁵ His father was a dentist, his mother a housewife, and Rouméguère grew up in a comfortable, bourgeoisie family.²⁶ Little record of his early childhood exists, apart from one family story passed down to his own son, Marcel: The infant Rouméguère was placed with a wet nurse outside of town. When her milk dried up, fearing the loss of her income, she began feeding the infant fried crusts.²⁷ His parents eventually discovered the situation and quickly removed their son, but Rouméguère blamed his lifelong ill health on the incident.²⁸

As a boy, Rouméguère attended seminary school in Auch.²⁹ His years there seem to have passed relatively uneventfully. The next mention of Rouméguère describes a young man of sixteen, a student receiving a classical education at the city's high school.³⁰ During a stay with extended family in Luchon, in the Pyrenees, over the Pentecost vacation, he met and fell for a

²⁵ Rouméguère, "Notes Biographiques," 1.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Ibid, 2.

fourteen-year-old girl.³¹ Rouméguère convinced her to run away with him, and the pair made it to Algeria before being caught and forcibly returned to France.³² Rouméguère spent a period of time in a youth correctional facility following this episode—a stay that was shortened as he faked madness, claiming he would turn to dust if touched and had walked to Algeria like Moses through the Red Sea.³³ He managed to fool enough doctors to be discharged but quickly recovered and confessed when his parents considered institutionalizing him.³⁴ These incidents of Rouméguère's youth reveal a willingness to subvert authority and a daring nature, indicating the early formation of the fiercely independent character that shaped the direction of both Rouméguère's artwork and his life as a whole. That Rouméguère is recorded to have spent time in Luchon as a youth is also noteworthy, confirming his early acquaintance with the mountains he later painted so often—perhaps the start of his lifelong infatuation with the peaks and valleys and ever-shifting skies of the Pyrenees.

For a brief time upon exiting the correctional facility, Rouméguère appeared ready to settle down and pursue a serious career. At eighteen, he was assigned a position at the postal service but held the job for less than a year before requesting an indefinite leave of absence.³⁵ Rouméguère never returned to his post. Instead, in 1881, he left town once again with a different young woman.³⁶ This time, the pair went only as far as Périgueux, where Rouméguère supported himself and his partner as a gymnast and baritone singer.³⁷ Music, it seems, was also an early

³¹ Rouméguère, "Notes Biographiques," 2.

³² Ibid., 2-3.

³³ Ibid., 3

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid., 4.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Ibid.

interest, and Rouméguère's understanding of this art served as the basis for his later theories of painting.

By 1885, Rouméguère had joined the 23rd Regiment of the Artillery in Toulouse, his latest relationship apparently having ended.³⁸ He served for only a year and a half before deserting in 1886—when, for the third time, he ran away in the company of a young woman, who eventually became his wife.³⁹ The couple settled in Erba, Italy, near Milan, before moving to the city itself.⁴⁰ Here, Rouméguère began to seriously pursue the life of an artist.⁴¹

The beginnings of Jean-Louis Rouméguère's artistic career are as murky as the beginnings of his life. He was a proud autodidact who claimed to have only taken one painting lesson in his life, at the age of sixteen.⁴² During approximately two years in Italy, Rouméguère painted under the alias "Ayram Luigi," making a meager but sufficient living from the sale of his works.⁴³ Around 1888, Rouméguère and his wife left for Belgium, where Rouméguère continued to work as an artist.⁴⁴ Fascinated by the ever-fleeting effects of light and shadow, obsessed by the idea of an art that was true and sincere, he gradually developed a systematic method of painting that shaped his mature style. Rouméguère claimed this method was his alone, refusing to ally himself with any particular school or group of artists and seeming to scrupulously avoid in his writings any direct mention of others whose art or theories of art affected his own.⁴⁵

³⁸ Rouméguère, "Notes Biographiques," 5.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Brel-Bordaz, "La Donation Rouméguère," 77.

⁴³ Rouméguère, "Notes Biographiques," 5. According to Brel-Bordaz, Rouméguère exhibited in various Salons in Italy, but I have been unable to locate additional evidence of this.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁵ Jean-Louis Rouméguère, "Conférence sur une tentative de peinture scientifique," *La Revue Rouge* 16 (1906): 1. The only mention Rouméguère makes of a possible influence is in his third note, in which he briefly mentions Michel Eugène Chevreul.

This carefully-cultivated aura of individuality makes any attempt to definitively trace the early contacts and influences of Rouméguère's career mostly speculation. However, it is worth noting that he spent these early years in Milan and Brussels—both important centers of art and artistic thought. Milan in the late 1880s was on the cusp of the Divisionist movement that would peak a decade later. Divisionism, despite its ties to Italian nationalism, was nonetheless heavily influenced by French Neo-Impressionist ideas and contemporary theories of color and vision—ideas that Rouméguère explored throughout his career.⁴⁶ Notably, one of Milan's influential Divisionist artists was also a self-taught landscapist: Vittore Grubicy de Dragon (1851-1920), whose serene Alpine landscapes (figure 7) were influenced by the writings of French philosophers Paul Souriau (1852-1926) and Jean-Marie Guyau (1854-1888), as well as the color theories of Michel Eugène Chevreul (1786-1889) and Ogden Rood (1831-1902).⁴⁷ There are a number of parallels between Grubicy's work and Rouméguère's: a focus on pure landscapes, emphasis on quiet grandeur over drama, and radiant effects of light, for example. Interestingly, Grubicy, like Rouméguère, sometimes displayed his work in polyptych format.⁴⁸ Though Rouméguère left Italy before Divisionism, and Grubicy's career, reached its height, the similarities in the work of these two painters are intriguing, particularly given Grubicy's French influences. Even if Rouméguère did not actually know or know of Grubicy, it is certainly possible that the two artists were inspired by one or more of the same sources.

Even less is known of Rouméguère's time in Brussels—Marcel noted that his father wished to try his luck as a painter in the city but did not specify what exactly drew the artist to

⁴⁶ Despite this interest, Rouméguère does not seem to have experimented with optical mixing, as the Neo-Impressionists and Divisionists did, through the use of short strokes of pure color. Rather, he consistently retained a more traditional approach to color mixing and application.

⁴⁷ Vivien Greene, "Pittura ideista: The Spiritual in Divisionist Painting," *California Italian Studies* no.5, 1 (2014): 1 and 5, <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/78z1j1fb>.

⁴⁸ Greene, "Pittura ideista," 12.

make this move.⁴⁹ However, Brussels, like Milan, was home to a lively arts scene, attracting artists from across Europe who worked in a wide range of styles. A form of Impressionism took hold in Belgium in the 1880s; the French Neo-Impressionists were highly influential here as well, as demonstrated by Georges Seurat's (1859-1891) display of *Un Dimanche Après-Midi à l'Île de La Grande Jatte—1884* (1884-86) in the city in 1887. Brussels was also particularly friendly to independent artists and new ideas—Roumégère arrived in the era of *Les XX*, while the *Société Libre des Beaux-Arts*, formed in 1868, had included landscapists such as Guillaume Vogels (1836-1896), Hippolyte Boulenger (1837-1874), and Louis Artan (1837-1890) among its first generation of members.⁵⁰ Again, while it is impossible to say what exactly drew Roumégère to the city, the light-filled skies of these masters, as in Boulenger's view of Dinant (1870, figure 8), seem to prefigure those of the younger artist. Furthermore, artists in Brussels in this time were actively exploring the relationship between art and music—*Les XX* staged modern concerts as well as art shows, and, the concept of the *Gesamtkunstwerk*, or the total work of art, enthralled not only opera-goers, but also the larger artistic community.⁵¹

Thus, while it is impossible to pinpoint exactly how the beginning of Roumégère's career unfolded, it is evident that the artist spent these formative years in an environment steeped in theories of light and color, debates on the role of science in art, and discussions of the relationship between art and other means of expression, specifically music—ideas essential to the methodology that came to define his mature career.

⁴⁹ Roumégère, "Notes Biographiques," 5-6.

⁵⁰ As noted in discussions of "*Les XX and La Libre Esthétique*" provided by the *Musée Fin-de Siècle*, www.fin-de-siecle-museum.be, and Gawan Fagard, "A Brief History of the Visual Arts in Brussels," in *The Brussels Reader*, edited by Eric Corijn and Jessican Van den Ven (Brussels: Academic and Scientific Publishers, 2013): 331.

⁵¹ As noted in "*Opera*," the *Musée Fin-de Siècle*, www.fin-de-siecle-museum.be.

In 1890, after approximately two years in Brussels, amnesty was granted to deserters and Rouméguère and his wife returned to France.⁵² Struggling to make a living as a painter, Rouméguère settled in Paris to train as a dentist like his father.⁵³ As he studied for his new occupation, however, Rouméguère did not give up his artistic ambitions. He seems to have begun building a Parisian network during these years, even taking the opportunity to show his work to the *Directeur des Musées Nationaux*, Albert Kaempfen (1826-1907), who proclaimed, “You will be the incontestable master of skies!”⁵⁴ In 1894, his dentistry education complete, Jean-Louis returned to Auch with his family—now including the infant Marcel—and took over his father’s practice, serving as the town’s dentist for the next decade.⁵⁵ Rouméguère also took up a number of additional pursuits, including the creation of perfumes, liquors, pastry flavorings, and toothpaste—ostensibly to supplement his income, though he tended to jump from one new area of research to another too quickly to establish anything very profitable.⁵⁶ Still, Rouméguère considered dentistry and his other activities secondary to his most consuming passion: painting.⁵⁷

Rouméguère continued to devote time daily to developing his method of painting, reserving his mornings for his art.⁵⁸ During this time, he also perfected his mature technique, developing what he later referred to as his “scientific” method of painting, grounded in his understanding of music and color as well as close and continuous observation of nature.⁵⁹ In his notes, Marcel recalled his father’s frequent ventures into the countryside, describing how the

⁵² Rouméguère, “Notes Biographiques,” 5-6.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁷ Brel-Bordaz, “La Donation Rouméguère,” 78.

⁵⁸ Rouméguère, “Notes biographiques,” 6.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

elder Rouméguère would even hurry out in the middle of the night at the sound of a fire alarm in order to observe the effects of the flames.⁶⁰

Despite his devotion to his art, Rouméguère did not exhibit during these years, avoiding the spotlight until he was at last satisfied with his technique. Finally, in 1905, he made his debut at the *Salon de l'Union Artistique* in Toulouse with the *Phases of Light*, the tangible manifestation of his “scientific” method.⁶¹

The 1905 exhibition was the catalyst Rouméguère needed. The opinion of the critics was largely in his favor, the merit of his technique confirmed. Invigorated by his success, the artist decided to leave his dental practice to his associate and go to Paris to attempt to make his way in the capital.⁶² He arrived in the city in early 1906 and began to look for a place to show the work that he had accumulated over the course of several years—but this proved no easy task. In a letter to his son penned shortly after his arrival in Paris, Rouméguère described both the exhilaration of having people of high repute take an interest in his work and his frustration with the slowness and bureaucracy involved in finding a place to host the solo exhibition he envisioned.⁶³ Ultimately, however, he was successful in his search, and a month and a half later, in June of 1906, one hundred and fifty-six of Rouméguère’s paintings debuted in a solo show at the *Cercle de la Librairie*.⁶⁴ In conjunction with the exhibition, the artist also gave a lecture on the method he had spent so many years refining, publishing the transcript of his presentation in a booklet, “Conférence sur une Tentative de Peinture Scientifique” (1906).⁶⁵ Though the event did

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Brel-Bordaz, “La Donation Rouméguère,” 78.

⁶² Rouméguère, “Notes Biographiques,” 7.

⁶³ Jean-Louis Rouméguère, Letter to his son, April 9, 1906, Rouméguère collection, Musée des Jacobins.

⁶⁴ Brel-Bordaz, “La Donation Rouméguère,” 78. The *Cercle de la Librairie* was (and is) a syndicate of professions associated with bookmaking and printing. The headquarters, where Rouméguère’s show was held, was at 117 Boulevard Saint-Germain in Paris.

⁶⁵ Jean-Louis Rouméguère, “Conférence sur une tentative de peinture scientifique,” *La Revue Rouge* 16 (1906).

not produce significant sales (Roumégère apparently tended to price his pieces high), the painter's future seemed bright.⁶⁶

Over the next several years, Roumégère continued to exhibit but never gained entry to competitive salons—having tried to enter the *Salon des Artistes* and the *Salon d'Automne* and been rejected from both, he appears to have given up that ambition.⁶⁷ There is also no evidence that he held any more major shows. However, Roumégère did place his work in at least one gallery, and he found critical success in the *Salon des Indépendants* from 1908 until 1913.⁶⁸ These years were also bracketed by a significant honor: in 1908, Roumégère was named to the *Ordre des Palmes Académiques*, which recognized those having made significant cultural contributions to France; in 1913, he was nominated to the rank of *Officier de l'Instruction Publique*.⁶⁹ This and other evidence suggests that, although he seems never to have joined any official or unofficial community of artists, Roumégère was able to establish a network of friends and supporters. Among the most prestigious of these was the writer and critic Gustave Geffroy (1855-1926), an early champion of artists such as Claude Monet (1840-1926) and Paul

⁶⁶ Roumégère, "Notes Biographiques," 7.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 7-8. Also, a list of twelve paintings shown at the Felix Petavy gallery in Paris from June 7 through June 15, 1911, is among the documents in the *Musée des Jacobins* collection.

⁶⁹ Marcel Roumégère, "Le Journal (juin 1908)," "Appréciations dans la Presse sur les Œuvres de J.-L. Roumégère," and *Journal Officiel de la République Française* 45, n. 242 (September 7, 1913): 7999. The Order of the *Palmes Académiques*, still in existence today, was founded in 1808 by Napoleon I to honor members of the imperial university and in 1866 was opened to all those having made contributions to public instruction, including independent writers, etc. At that time, the order was composed of two levels, *Officier d'Académie* (silver palms) and *Officier de l'Instruction Publique* (gold palms). Roumégère's receipt of the *Palmes Académiques* is one of those details of his life that has been nearly lost—not mentioned in Brel-Bordaz's article or any other secondary-source account of the artist's life that I could locate. Oddly enough, even Marcel Roumégère's account of his father's life does not mention this distinction—only an article among those he compiled notes the achievement. Nevertheless, Roumégère was originally named to the Order of the *Palmes Académiques* in 1908 and promoted, after the customary five-year period, in 1913. The exact rationale behind his receipt of the award was not revealed by my research, although, since the Order was closely connected to education, it seems plausible that this was a recognition of the merit of his "Conférence sur une Tentative de Peinture Scientifique" and subsequent articles. Background information on the award is from the Archives-Nationales search guide, "Les decorations de l'Instruction publique et de l'Education nationale."

Cézanne (1839-1906). Geffroy also happened to be Roumégère's neighbor—the artist's Parisian residence, 66 Avenue les Gobelins, was next door to the *Manufacture des Gobelins*, the renowned tapestry manufactory of which Geffroy was the director.⁷⁰

In 1910, the sudden death of his mother required Roumégère to return to Auch after a mere four years in Paris.⁷¹ Brel-Bordaz states that this return was definitive; Marcel Roumégère's account is less clear. However, the evidence seems to suggest that Roumégère continued to divide his time between the two locations or at least made trips to Paris until and even during World War I.⁷² The artist continued to show his paintings in the *Salon des Indépendants*, listed under his Parisian address in the exhibition catalogues, and in 1913, when he was named *Officier de L'Instruction Publique*, Roumégère was listed as "*Roumégère (Jean-Louis) artiste-peintre à Paris.*"⁷³

Roumégère did not show in 1914; by 1915, the outbreak of World War I forced the cancellation of the *Salon des Indépendants* and likely dispelled any remaining possibility of a return to Paris—by the time the war was over, Roumégère's wife own health was in decline.⁷⁴ Despite the urgings of Geffroy and others, the artist sent Marcel to Paris to collect or sell his remaining belongings, giving up his studio and dreams of a Parisian career.⁷⁵ Roumégère continued to paint, his son wrote, but had little interest in trying to sell his art and was soon all-but-forgotten by the art world that had barely begun to know his name.⁷⁶ Rather than continuing to pursue the markets and salons of Paris, the ailing Roumégère transitioned from dentist to

⁷⁰ Roumégère, "Notes Biographiques," 7-8.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² This is supported by the presence of a 1916 travel pass to Paris in the *Musée des Jacobins's* Roumégère collection. Roumégère's profession is listed as "*artiste-peintre.*"

⁷³ *Journal Officiel de la République Française*, 7999.

⁷⁴ Roumégère, "Notes Biographiques," 8.

⁷⁵ Brel-Bordaz, "La Donation Roumégère," 84, and Roumégère, "Notes Biographiques," 8.

⁷⁶ Roumégère, "Notes Biographiques," 8.

inventor, creating a number of products ranging from perfumes to toothpastes to greeting cards.⁷⁷ Along with his brother-in-law, Rouméguère designed a dental implant that was widely used by top professionals in the field for many years.⁷⁸ In 1925, following a botched operation to remove a tuberculosis abscess, the painter passed away at the age of sixty-eight.⁷⁹

Rouméguère's story might have ended there had it not been for the devotion of his son, Marcel, with whom the artist always had a close relationship.⁸⁰ The younger Rouméguère preserved the paintings present in his father's studio at the time of the artist's death.⁸¹ These, along with Rouméguère's published and some unpublished writings, now form the Rouméguère collection of the *Musée des Jacobins*, discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

⁷⁷ Rouméguère, "Notes Biographiques," 8, and François Bajou, "La petite histoire de Jean-Louis Rouméguère: Un Auscitain Inventeur de Génie," *Sud Ouest*, April 18, 1980

⁷⁸ Bajou, "La Petite Histoire."

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 8.

⁸⁰ Supported by Marcel Rouméguère's interest in preserving his father's work and the testimony of Madeleine Boyer.

⁸¹ Brel-Bordaz, "La Donation Rouméguère," 75.

CHAPTER II: Known Works and Documentation

Section A: The Rouméguère Collection at the Musée des Jacobins in Auch

The Rouméguère collection, donated by Marcel Rouméguère (1896-1979), was accepted by the *Musée des Jacobins* in 1978 and went on display at the museum's reopening, after a period of closure, in 1979.⁸² The younger Rouméguère felt that the acceptance of the collection at last ensured his father the recognition that he deserved, and the acquisition came just in time—unfortunately, the son did not live to see his father's work installed. In a sad coincidence, Marcel was buried on the day that Jean-Louis Rouméguère's exhibition was announced to the public.⁸³

The Rouméguère acquisition consisted of over three hundred paintings, sketchbooks, and painting supplies and materials from Rouméguère's studio—including some of Rouméguère's paints, his palette, and perhaps most significantly, the tiny wooden “pocket box” (figure 9) on display alongside the metro card series.⁸⁴ Rouméguère mentioned this box in his “Conférence sur une Tentative de Peinture Scientifique,” writing, “I have had made a little pocket box, small enough to have it always on me, to live with it [. . .].”⁸⁵ The little box even retains the leather strap that would have allowed it to be attached to the artist's belt.

Before their 1979 debut, some of the artist's paintings were re-introduced to the public through a 1974 exhibition by the *Société Archéologique du Gers*, and several paintings were also included in a 1976 show titled *Nadar, Portraits of Artists and of Critics*, both in Auch.⁸⁶ Post-acquisition, the quasi-totality of Rouméguère's work went on display in the 1994 exhibition

⁸² Brel-Bordaz, “La Donation Rouméguère,” 75.

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Paintings and artifacts discussed are as recorded in the *Musée des Jacobins*' collections database and viewed by the author in March 2018.

⁸⁵ Rouméguère, “Conférence,” 12. Original French: [J]’avais fait faire une petite boîte de poche, assez petite pour l’avoir toujours sur moi, pour vivre avec elle.

⁸⁶ Brel-Bordaz, “La Donations Rouméguère,” 75.

Dialogues with Rouméguère at the *Musée des Jacobins*.⁸⁷ In 1997, several of Rouméguère's paintings were also included in the museum's exhibition titled *Hidden Treasures*, and in 2001, he was featured in *Gersois Painters and Sculptors from the 18th through 20th Centuries*.⁸⁸ This appears to have been the most recent instance of Rouméguère's inclusion in a special exhibit. Today, most of his paintings are kept in the museum's archives, with a few key pieces and about two dozen small studies on permanent display.

The comprehensive nature of the museum's collection of Rouméguère's work makes it ideal to study, as so many of the artist's key works are contained in one place. However, it is important to recognize that the collection remains incomplete. An article in *Notre Midi*, for example, includes images of several charcoal drawings not included in the museum's holdings.⁸⁹ Brel-Bordaz's 1980 article also mentions works "scattered in private collections."⁹⁰ With the exception of those paintings and drawings in the collection of Mme. Madeleine Boyer (to be discussed in more detail in the following section) the whereabouts of these pieces, including those that Rouméguère sold throughout his lifetime, are today unknown. This demonstrates the importance of the museum's conservation of the artist's oeuvre and the vulnerability of those artworks not included in the *Musée des Jacobins* collection.

Additionally, it is important to remember that this collection comprises the contents of Rouméguère's studio at the time of his death—neither the artist himself nor a collector has curated this body of work; no process of selection has separated rough, experimental sketches, or

⁸⁷ Elisabeth, Penisson ed., *Jean-Louis Rouméguère, 1863-1925: Chercheur de Lumière: Collection du Musée d'Auch*, (Auch: Musée d'Auch, 1994).

⁸⁸ Exhibit Guide, *Trésors Cachées*, Auch: Musée de Jacobins, 1997 and "Peintres et sculpteurs gersois du XVIIIe au XXe Siècle," *Petit Journal de l'Exposition* (Auch: Musée des Jacobins, 2001): 10-11.

⁸⁹ The article in question is a clipping from *Notre Midi* entitled "Ode au Peintre Rouméguère;" no identifying date is given.

⁹⁰ Brel-Bordaz, "La Donation Rouméguère," 89.

perhaps even paintings that the artist himself would not have considered successful, from Rouméguère's most prized masterpieces. Though the museum has carefully selected the works on permanent display to include several of the artist's most important paintings as well as others showcasing a certain quality of craftsmanship and controlled brushwork that place them among the artists' mature works, evaluation of Rouméguère's larger oeuvre requires this more extensive analysis.

The artworks within the *Musée des Jacobins*' collection are painted in oils on a variety of supports: canvas, wood, cardboard, and cardboard covered with canvas. Metro tickets were not Rouméguère's only unconventional choice of materials—another, earlier painting is on the back of a wooden 1902 calendar. The paintings also vary greatly in size. The largest of the collection are two measuring 193 by 130 centimeters each, *Autumn Sky in the Mountains* (*Ciel d'Automne en Montagne*, n.d., figure 10) and *The Conflagration* (*L'Incendie*, c. 1909, figure 11), along with *Effect of Morning in the Mountains* (*Effet du Matin dans les Montagnes*, before 1906, figure 12) at 200 by 60 centimeters.

At least two of these large paintings are significant within Rouméguère's oeuvre. *Effect of Morning in the Mountains*, depicting a layered, backlit scene of hazy morning in the Pyrenees, is discussed in "Conférence sur une Tentative de la Peinture Scientifique," along with a series of small studies composed specifically as demonstration pieces. *The Conflagration*, a painting of a country home gone up in flames in the middle of the night, was shown in the *Salon des Indépendants* and is Rouméguère's only large work now on permanent display. The third, *Autumn Sky in the Mountains*, resembles the description given for a painting that was purchased

for the *mairie* of Auch in 1910, but it cannot be established, based on current evidence, that this is the same work.⁹¹

Most of Rouméguère's paintings are small, with all but a handful measuring forty centimeters or less in length. Many are only five by ten centimeters. The ten tiny landscapes on Parisian metro tickets are the smallest at three by six centimeters and were also quite important to the artist, who hoped at the time that this endeavor would advance his career. Rouméguère created the miniscule paintings with the intention of presenting them as a gift to the King of Greece, who collected metro tickets.⁹² Unfortunately, the king was assassinated shortly before Rouméguère finished the series, leading the oft-unlucky artist to remark to his son, "With my project, I've just killed the king of Greece."⁹³ Still, the paintings in themselves are remarkable, both for their unusual support and for the degree of luminosity that the artist obtained within such a tiny space.

Perhaps the most important paintings of Rouméguère's career within the museum's collection are the *Phases of Light* (figure 5), the artist's ten-painting masterpiece first shown at the 1905 *Salon de l'Union Artistique* in Toulouse. This series has a nocturnal counterpart in the four-painting series *States of the Full Moon* (*États de la Pleine Lune*, before 1906, figures 13-16), also framed together, with the four images in a straight line; this piece is among the artist's

⁹¹ Jean de Caldain, "Chronique Locale, Auch: Un Tableau de J.-L. Rouméguère à la Mairie d'Auch," April 1907. The painting donated to the city's collection by then-mayor Dr. Samalens is documented in this article. Mme. Madeleine Boyer also recalls seeing a painting by Rouméguère at the *mairie* as a child. However, no painting by Rouméguère is currently held within the collection of the *Mairie d'Auch*, and there is no available documentation to determine if the painting is still in existence or where it might currently be located. *Autumn Sky in the Mountains* was acquired with the rest of Rouméguère's work in 1979. The motif does match the given description of "a gorge with a gave at sunset" (*une gorge avec un gave au coucher du soleil*), and its large size would make it one a patron might consider worthy of donation, but it is impossible to know if this is the same painting or is in any way related to that purchased by the mayor for the city of Auch in 1910.

⁹² Rouméguère, "Notes Biographiques," 23.

⁹³ Ibid. This must refer to the assassination of King George I on March 13, 1913, allowing an approximate date of 1912-1913 for these paintings.

works not on display. Another framed group is the miniature *Scales of Morning* series (*Gammes du Matin*, c. 1913, figure 17). This series of ten tiny paintings was Roumégère's only entry in 1913 *Salon des Indépendants* and is also among the noteworthy pieces that remain in storage.⁹⁴

Also included in the museum's collection are a number of documents and the artist's own writings, both published and unpublished. Documentation of Roumégère's life and career includes several dozen contemporary newspaper clippings with reviews of the artist's work, the exhibition guide for his 1906 *Cercle de la Librairie* exhibition, lists of works and sale logs, and personal effects such as copies of Roumégère's identity card, letters, and family photographs.⁹⁵ One particularly important letter is mentioned in Chapter I, in which Roumégère wrote to his then twelve-year-old son, describing in depth his struggles as he attempted to make his way as an artist in Paris. Roumégère's known writings, all of which are preserved in the collection, include his "Réponse du Peintre Roumégère au Critique d'Art Jean de l'Hers" (1905), the text of his "Conférence sur une Tentative de Peinture Scientifique" (1906), the series of articles from the 1907 *Journal des Artistes* in which he expanded upon his theories, and an unpublished fictional satire called "The Paroxysm of Art" (n.d.) in which Roumégère critiqued the direction

⁹⁴ Dominique Lobstein, *Dictionnaire des Indépendants: 1884-1914: Troisième Tome N-Z* (Dijon: L'Echelle de Jacob, 2003), 1497.

⁹⁵ Roumégère is listed as an artist on his identity card, supporting Marcel's claim that he always considered his art his primary occupation.

of the avant-garde.⁹⁶ In addition, the manuscript penned by Marcel Rouméguère offers significant insight into the artist's life, recounting what the son knew of his father's turbulent youth, long period of study and experimentation, brief career in Paris, and the final years of his life. The only other known collection of Rouméguère's work and effects is that of Madeleine Boyer.

Section B: Additional Works

The twenty-one paintings and dozens of sketches and drawings in the collection of Madeleine Boyer are a valuable addition to those held by the museum and include some significant works. Two of Madeleine Boyer's paintings by Rouméguère, though undated, are stylistically identifiable as early works. Three others are numbered, denoting that they were among those exhibited at Rouméguère's 1906 *Cercle de la Librairie* show in Paris. One of these, No. 58, *Morning Mists (Brumes du Matin)*, before 1906, figure 18), is one of Rouméguère's small five-centimeter by ten-centimeter pieces—a simple scene of hazy trees, the foliage of those closer to the viewer illuminated by the filtered morning light, while the stand of taller trees behind them seems to fade into the sky.

⁹⁶ Jean-Louis Rouméguère, "Réponse du Peintre Rouméguère au Critique d'Art Jean de l'Hers," *Critique d'Art*. (Toulouse, May 23, 1905); Jean-Louis Rouméguère, "Conférence sur une tentative de peinture scientifique," *La Revue Rouge* 16 (1906); Jean-Louis Rouméguère, "La Peinture Scientifique: Essai sur l'Harmonie en Peinture," *Journal des Artistes*, February 10, 1907, 5329-5330; Jean-Louis Rouméguère, "La Peinture Scientifique: Essai sur l'Harmonie en Peinture II," *Journal des Artistes*, February 17, 1907, 5340; Jean-Louis Rouméguère, "La Peinture Scientifique: Essai sur l'Harmonie en Peinture III," *Journal des Artistes*, February 24, 1907, 5348; Jean-Louis Rouméguère, "La Peinture Scientifique: Essai sur l'Harmonie en Peinture IV: Suite et Fin," *Journal des Artistes*, March 3, 1907, 5356; Jean-Louis Rouméguère, "La Peinture Scientifique: Essai sur l'Harmonie en Peinture: 2ème Note," *Journal des Artistes*, April 14, 1907, 5399; Jean-Louis Rouméguère, "La Peinture Scientifique: Essai sur l'Harmonie en Peinture: 2ème Note," *Journal des Artistes*, April 21, 1907, 5407; Jean-Louis Rouméguère, "La Peinture Scientifique: Essai sur l'Harmonie en Peinture: Troisième Note," *Journal des Artistes*, May 5, 1907, 5424; Jean-Louis Rouméguère, "La Peinture Scientifique: Essai sur l'Harmonie en Peinture: Quatrième Note," *Journal des Artistes*, June 23, 1907, 5473; Jean-Louis Rouméguère, "Le Paroxysme de l'Art," (Musée des Jacobins).

The other two numbered paintings in this collection are unusual in motif; differing from those held by the museum, these add to Rouméguère's repertoire and confirm the impressive diversity of effects the artist attempted to capture. No. 128, *Morning Snow* (*Neige au Matin*, before 1906, figure 19), depicts the High Pyrenees. Clusters of dark, leafless trees and underbrush define the snowy hills of the foreground. Beyond them, the scene opens out onto a vast expanse of multiple rugged, snowy peaks in the distance. This was uncommon for Rouméguère, who tended to focus on closer compositions even in his mountain scenes, which typically comprise only a few peaks at most. No. 76 is also a winter picture—*Snow in the First Rays of Light* (*Neige au Premiers Rayons*, before 1906, figure 20). Here, Rouméguère chose as his subject rolling hillsides covered in fresh snow, the branches of the trees thick and frozen in the morning light. The icy boughs are captured with lively, expressive brushwork that contrasts with the exceeding delicacy of the effect of light Rouméguère achieved in this painting—the gentle, slightly-warm glow of filtered sun on fresh snow is an example of the artist's ability to attain a sense of luminosity within even a very limited tonal range.

Among the most intriguing paintings of the Boyer collection, and also the smallest, is a little scene of trees overhanging a river (n.d., figure 21). Painted on a game token only a few centimeters in diameter, this piece confirms Rouméguère's penchant for painting on unconventional materials. The same tendency carries into the Mme. Boyer's important collection of drawings, which includes dozens of small pen and pencil sketches that almost double as an archive of documents from Rouméguère's life. The artist seems to have drawn on whatever he had at hand—mountains, rivers, and trees adorn the backs of 1914 invitations to the *Salon des Indépendants* and a ticket to his own 1906 show (figures 22-23, c. 1914 and c. 1906). Rouméguère even embellished the back flap of a black-edged envelope, once bearing news of a

death, with a tiny scene of sunlit woods. These drawings provide insight into both Rouméguère's interests and his method of working—he seems to have frequently composed his scenes through drawing before painting them.

Section C: Restoring Original Titles

In order to more fully understand Rouméguère's artwork and career, it would be ideal to be able to match the paintings referenced in the various critical reviews and the artist's own publications with his works. In many cases, this is not possible based upon what is currently known, but one particular document has been useful in making some identifications. The *Musée des Jacobins* holds a copy of the exhibition catalogue that was published along with Rouméguère's 1906 show in Paris, which includes a numbered list of paintings with corresponding titles—the document used to restore the titles of the aforementioned works in both the *Musée des Jacobins* and Boyer collections.⁹⁷

Based on the correspondence between titles and images, it can be concluded that these numbers refer to those found on the front of some of Rouméguère's paintings, either beside or just below the signature. Only a small portion of the paintings in the museum's collection have such a number, but those that do may be matched to their original titles with reasonable security—which, in some cases, also allows known images to be linked to titles mentioned in contemporary critical reviews. However, several factors complicate this identification process.

Rouméguère's interest in capturing specific qualities of atmosphere and light is reflected in the titles he gave his work, which were usually based on time of day or effect and often

⁹⁷*Exposition J.-L. Rouméguère: Avant-Propos par Georges Lemoyne* (Paris: Cercle de la Librairie, 1906).

A second version of this catalogue in the *Musée des Jacobins* collection includes annotations in the artist's hand, listing additional numbered paintings up to 181; only those numbered up to 156 were included in the 1906 show, but those that can be identified based on Rouméguère's later notations have also been included in Appendix I.

repeated. Also, with the exception of a few very early paintings, Rouméguère did not date his works. Thus, not all of the paintings mentioned within published articles, the 1906 exhibition catalogue, or the catalogues of the *Salon des Indépendants* can be matched to known works. Those paintings that can be identified, however, provide valuable insight into Rouméguère's work, its evolution, and its reception by critics.

Appendices I and II attempt to create a system by which to better understand Rouméguère's oeuvre. Appendix I lists the known works that were part of the 1906 exhibition, recognizing the fact that the original titles that Rouméguère gave these paintings do not always correspond with the titles assigned by the museum. I have included the museum number, the museum title, the 1906 exhibition number, and the 1906 exhibition title of all works for which this is known with reasonable certainty. Appendix II lists the paintings, excepting those included in the 1906 show, that are documented as having been exhibited during Rouméguère's career, either in the *Salon de l'Union Artistique* in Toulouse or the *Salon des Indépendants* in Paris. When possible, these are listed with their corresponding museum accession number, while those today unknown are listed by their original exhibition title only.

A number of Rouméguère's paintings also have other identifying information in addition to the numbering system of the 1906 exhibition catalogue. Several miniature studies are labeled on the reverse side with "*Salon des Indépendants*, 1911," or some abbreviation of this, in the artist's hand, indicating that these are among the *notes de poche* exhibited that year.⁹⁸ Many paintings also include numbers or numbered tags on the reverse. Research has not revealed, thus far, the significance of these numbers, though they were likely assigned by a gallery or at other exhibitions. Still, the current understanding of Rouméguère's work is expanded by those

⁹⁸ *Note de poche*, or "pocket note" was a term used to describe small paintings that were usually made *en plein air*, often as studies, although they could be considered finished works in themselves.

identifications that can be made. The following chapter begins to place these works, and the artist, within the context of their time and region, examining Rouméguère's identity as an artist of France's southwest.

CHAPTER III: A Painter of the *Midi*: Rouméguère's Southwestern Landscape

Place came to have an unprecedented level of importance in nineteenth- and twentieth-century French landscape painting. The French countryside gained new accessibility with the building of railroads and growing tourist culture, while the rise of Romanticism led the country's varied landscape to be increasingly linked to a sense of patriotism. According to art historian Vernonique Chagnon-Burke:

Under the influence of Romanticism, which, by the 1830s, had become institutionalized, representations of nature functioned as the repository of one's own feelings, as well as one's patriotic feelings for one's native land. For this audience landscape paintings became more meaningful than the deeds and the love affairs of the Greek gods.⁹⁹

As the century progressed, despite continued resistance from some within the *Académie des Beaux-Arts*, more and more artists and critics began to embrace the idea of pure landscape—and particularly French landscape. With the shift away from classical, composed landscape painting to working from the motif, landscape painters became more closely associated with the places of their origin or inspiration. More artists chose to remain in France rather than to go to Italy to study. Whereas Jean-Baptiste-Camille Corot (1796-1875), for example, spent significant time in Italy, Théodore Rousseau (1812-1867) made the whole of his homeland his subject—especially in his early years, Rousseau traveled throughout France to paint his country's forests, marshes, and mountains, before settling in Barbizon.¹⁰⁰ He and others succeeded in elevating the status of landscape painting to the point that Napoleon III set aside a large section of the Forest of Fontainebleau in 1861 as an artistic preserve in response to the petition of Rousseau and the growing prestige of the artists of the Barbizon school, recognizing the importance of protecting a

⁹⁹ Veronique Chagnon-Burke, "The Politicization of Nature: The Critical Reception of Barbizon Painting during the July Monarchy" (Ph.D. diss, The City University of New York, 2000), 131.

¹⁰⁰ Simon Kelly, "Theodore Rousseau (1812-67), His Patrons and Public" (D. Phil. Thesis, University of Oxford, 1996), xviii.

landscape that had inspired works of national pride.¹⁰¹ Meanwhile, Eugène Boudin (1824-1898) cultivated a career painting seascapes and beaches around the port cities of Honfleur and Le Havre, and even those who traveled as extensively as Claude Monet (1840-1926) often came to be associated with one particular region or town—when Monet settled at Giverny, an art colony developed there. Paul Gauguin (1848-1903) and other artists, including Émile Bernard (1868-1941) and Paul Sérusier (1864-1927), formed the school of Pont-Aven in Brittany; Paul Cézanne (1839-1906) cannot be fully understood apart from Aix-en-Provence and Mont Sainte-Victoire.¹⁰²

Much of the Rouméguère's intrigue, as well, is tied to the region in which he lived and painted. Though more concerned with color and light than topographical accuracy, Rouméguère showed no interest in these qualities in the abstract—only as they played out upon a tangible landscape. Thus, the harmony of effect that he sought ultimately served to elevate his motif—the landscapes of the south of France.

With the exception of a few early works, Rouméguère's known paintings depict France's central to southwest regions, never farther north than Auvergne, with the majority of his images seemingly drawn from the Gers—the department surrounding Rouméguère's hometown of Auch—and the Pyrenean mountains.¹⁰³ The ridges, crags, and cliffs of the Pyrenees recur frequently in Rouméguère's work. The *Phases of Light*, for instance, which exemplify the artist's

¹⁰¹ Greg Morris Thomas, "Theodore Rousseau and the Ecological Landscape" (Ph. D. diss., Harvard University, 1995), 367.

¹⁰² Luke Herrmann, "Pont-Aven: A Haven for Painters," *The British Art Journal* 14, no. 2 (Autumn 2013): 86.

¹⁰³ I am assuming here that the works dated from the 1880s and early 1890s depict Belgium or Italy, however, it is difficult to determine this for certain. Likewise, it is possible that Rouméguère occasionally painted elsewhere—three small seascapes, for instance, indicate that he was probably along the Mediterranean coast at some point, though where exactly would be impossible to determine. However, I can find no definitive proof that Rouméguère ever painted farther north than Auvergne, which is named among several titles on a gallery contract with Felix Petavy for a show from June 7-15, 1911. Twelve paintings are listed, each title also giving the location—Auvergne; Pyrenees, Gers, etc. Auvergne is typically considered part of central, not southern, France, though it is historically a part of the Occitan region.

typical motifs as well as his technique, are all set in or near the mountains, showcasing the diversity of terrain, vantage point, and atmospheric effects available to the artists who sought their subjects here.

Rouméguère was far from the only landscape painter of the region to be drawn to France's southern mountains; by the early nineteenth century, the Pyrenees had become a significant motif for painters, particularly those from Toulouse and the surrounding areas.¹⁰⁴ Though Auch is about fifty miles away from the nearest Pyrenean town, the mountains are visible from certain points in the city, especially on a clear day; the same is true in Toulouse. To the careful observer, the distant ridges serve as an atmospheric barometer of sorts—now mirage-like and hazy, now crisp and defined, now altogether invisible, obscured by some atmospheric condition that might only be deduced by the mountains' disappearance. Mysterious, majestic, at once timeless and ever-changing—the Pyrenees beckoned to artists like Rouméguère, drawing them time and again to seek their subjects in this rugged terrain.

For many painters, the mountains served as an inspiration for wild, dramatic celebrations of the sublime, sometimes pitting man against the elements. Eugene Isabey's (1803-1886) *The Footbridge over the Gave* (*La Passerelle sur la Gave*, 1856, figure 24), for example, shows a bridge across a raging torrent, the tiny human figures making the precarious crossing dwarfed by the immense and powerful natural elements that surround them.¹⁰⁵ Other artists, like Rouméguère, chose to emphasize harmony over drama. The simple, unpretentious scenes that he favored were in the tradition of the rural genre of landscape, in which the use of color was often

¹⁰⁴ Marguerite Gaston, "Les Peintres Toulousains et les Pyrénées à l'Epoque Romantique," *Annales du Midi* (1972): 271. Several of these painters and their work are discussed in more detail in Chapter V, Section II.

¹⁰⁵ Exhibition Guide, *Viver et Rever la Montagne, 15 Juin-16 September 2018, Liste des Auteurs*, Château Fort Musée Pyrénéen, Lourdes.

more vivid and important than in the more classical, heroic styles.¹⁰⁶ Rural landscapes also lacked the narrative of their heroic counterparts, and this was likewise true of Rouméguère's idyllic compositions.

Rouméguère favored pure landscape; though many of his paintings show the marks of human interaction with the land—a plowed field, a path, a crumbling farmhouse—he only rarely made human presence explicit. Among the artist's paintings that do include a human figure, one of his most compelling is *Solitary Voyager in a Gorge* (*Voyageur Solitaire dans une Gorge*, n.d., figure 25), which depicts a painter on a winding path among the crags of the Pyrenees, dwarfed by his surroundings. A graceful pine in the lower left inclines slightly towards the lone figure as if in acknowledgement. It is tempting to read this unusual, intriguing *Rückenfigur* as a sort of self-portrait, although it could also depict one of the many other artists wandering the mountains or simply represent a type rather than an individual.

More important to his compositions, along with the mountain ridges and cliffs of the southern region, were various other motifs that Rouméguère frequently included or to which he seems to have given special attention. Among these, Rouméguère's trees are of particular interest. In his early paintings, they are rigid and detailed; in his later compositions, the trunks and foliage become one expressive entity, a pliable element of the landscape that often seems posed—set against rigid mountains or stretching poignantly towards the moon or hazy sun (figure 26). The artist's arboreal fascination is also evident in his drawings—many of his most lively and varied are tree studies, as in the sketch of a slender-trunked sapling sprouting determinedly from a steep slope (figure 27). Though Rouméguère's landscapes often include

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

indeterminate clusters of foliage, the motif of a single tree takes on an affective, even anthropomorphic quality in many of his paintings.

Winding paths or rivers leading the eye back into the landscape also appear frequently in Rouméguère's work—of the ten *Phases of Light*, three include rivers, four contain distinct paths, and a pathway is suggested in two of the remaining three. Rivers and paths often offer an additional point of interest in Rouméguère's *sous-bois* paintings—forest scenes characterized by undergrowth and tree trunks that extend far beyond the picture plain.¹⁰⁷ However, Rouméguère also placed paths and rivers in more traditional compositions consisting of foreground, middle ground, and background. With the exception of the *sous-bois* scenes, almost all of Rouméguère's paintings can be divided into these three sections, and Rouméguère often cast the foreground in shadow, with the brightest highlights falling on the middle ground beyond (figure 28). The artist's reasoning for such compositions was simple—“[i]f light seduces me, shadow seduces me no less; I often place an effect of sunlight in the second plane with the goal of having all of the interest of the shadow in the first.”¹⁰⁸

Despite this proclaimed fascination with shadows, the focal point in many of Rouméguère's paintings is the sky of which Kaempfen had declared him “master.”¹⁰⁹ Cloud formations often serve as an integral part of Rouméguère's compositions, and the sun or moon make regular appearances. Rouméguère had a penchant for including the actual disk. In this way, he emphasized the importance of light, making it an overt rather than implied subject. Often, the hazy sun or rising moon is paired with a water feature, the light reflecting and sparkling in the

¹⁰⁷ Claudia Einecke, “Beyond Seeing: The Somatic Experience of Landscape Painting in Mid-Nineteenth-Century France” (Ph.D. diss., University of Missouri, 1994), 269.

¹⁰⁸ Rouméguère, “Conférence,” 7. Original French: Si la lumière me séduit, l'ombre ne me séduit pas moins ; il m'arrive souvent de faire un effet de soleil au second plan dans le but d'avoir tout l'intérêt de l'ombre au premier.

¹⁰⁹ Rouméguère, “Notes Biographiques,” 6.

ripples (figure 29). The inclusion of sun or moon served as well to demonstrate Rouméguère's mastery of his technique, as many of these paintings are particularly impressive in the sensation of luminosity achieved.

That luminosity, so characteristic of Rouméguère's work, underscores the interest in atmospheric effect that is at the heart of every one of the artist's mature paintings—from the cool, dark *sous-bois* to the mountain vistas, from the large-scale *Conflagration* to the snowy mountain on a metro ticket—and it is this element that makes Rouméguère's paintings more than the sum of their parts. This sense of atmosphere, this transcription of the rich and particular light of France's southwest, is arguably what elevates this painter from a mere amateur to a regional artist of merit.

Such claims require further justification, especially since this artist has been so nearly forgotten. Always the proud independent, Rouméguère does not seem to have been a member of, or involved in, any artist group or organization, academic or otherwise. His one attempt to show with the *Société de Peintres de Montagne* was not successful—after being invited by the group's president, Alexandre Nozal (1852-1829), who was a friend and supporter of his work, Rouméguère was rejected by the jury.¹¹⁰ In the century since his death, his paintings have not been a part of any show outside of the city of Auch. Moreover, Rouméguère typically refrained from naming the places represented in his work—nowhere did he designate particular peaks or vantage points, and, while further study might serve to identify some of these, the artist's system of titling his works suggests that geographic specificity was not important to him—it was the

¹¹⁰ Brel-Bordaz, "La Donation Rouméguère," 82. According to Brel-Bordaz's account of this incident, Rouméguère was livid after seeing the members of the jury judge his paintings by passing them around a table in a dark room, examining them by lamplight. No date is given for this incident.

effect of light that should be specified, more than the exact physical location.¹¹¹ Nonetheless, contemporary accounts support the idea that Rouméguère was seen, for however brief a moment, as an artist whose work captured the essence of the *Midi*—his focus on overall effect rather than geographic exactitude in fact serving to bolster this designation.

To the Parisian, Rouméguère's paintings would have represented a region whose warm, vivid light and rugged terrain contrasted sharply with the gray skies and lower elevations of the capital and its surroundings—a glimpse into a part of France that even today remains far removed from Paris, that had long maintained some degree of autonomy from the crown and that still spawns the occasional independence movement. In Rouméguère's day, the *Midi*, and particularly the Southwestern regions, maintained a semblance of intrigue and otherness.

Connected to the increasing importance of landscape in the nineteenth century was a surge of regionalism in France, linked to Romanticism but also to modernization. As art historian Richard Thomson has explained, the regionalist phenomenon highlights complex social and economic issues—the provincial label could simultaneously serve as a badge of pride and a form of objectification.¹¹² Also linked to the interest in regional art was an underlying current of conservatism, a reaction against rapid change—Thomson cites the increased presence of modern farm machinery in Toulouse, where such equipment had begun to be manufactured by the first years of the twentieth century.¹¹³ Threats to the land held particular significance since it was considered a part of France's *patrimoine*, or heritage, and this generated a renewed artistic interest in uncultivated, pristine landscapes. Thus, even as painters like Henri Matisse (1869-

¹¹¹ In the gallery contract with Felix Petavy, regions are listed with the title, but Rouméguère is never more specific than this.

¹¹² Richard Thomson, "Introduction," *Framing France: The Representation of Landscape in France, 1870-1914*, ed. Richard Thomson (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 8.

¹¹³ Thomson, *Framing France*, 8 and 161.

1954) and Pablo Picasso (1881-1973) were in the process of crafting a new, abstract art for a new era, the interest in rural and Barbizon-esque landscapes continued.¹¹⁴

The arrival of modernity was a threat not only to the preservation of the countryside, but also to the historical relationship between France's north and south, as historians Xavier de Planhol and Paul Claval explain:

The traditional geography of France was dominated by contrasts between the north and the south, which were a legacy of the Germanic and other invasions, and between the north-east and the south-west, which resulted from the socio-economic evolution of the Middle Ages. But this pattern was to be deeply upset by the emergence of a major centre of polarization, a development which took place much earlier in France than in the other countries of western Europe: this was the major urban centre constituted by Paris. The geographical effects of this development were considerable. Paris completely remodeled the countryside all around it. Above all, it refocused and completely reoriented the network of communications, for routes were now designed in a fashion that no longer had much to do with the deeper natural tendencies of the isthmus. All the regional differentiations connected with the contemporary economic revolution made their appearance within a country that was no longer divided by major contrasts but was, instead, dominated by a single headquarters.¹¹⁵

Thus, as Paris was reshaped in the nineteenth century, so was France as a whole, and so was the way that provincial artists were considered and discussed. As Thomson notes, "At the turn of the century landscape painters were frequently defined in terms of regional identity [. . .] Regional identity brought with it the associations of regional culture."¹¹⁶

Rouméguère and his art were most certainly a part of this phenomenon—he was among those painters continually referred to in relation to his region. In Toulouse and Paris alike, Rouméguère was cited as an artist of whom the *Midi* might be proud—in the words of one critic,

¹¹⁴ Thomson, *Framing France*, 8.

¹¹⁵ Xavier de Planhol and Paul Claval, *An Historical Geography of France* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 247.

¹¹⁶ Thomson, *Framing France*, 163.

“a painter of their country and for their country.”¹¹⁷ Landscapes such as Rouméguère’s, which presented an idyllic, unspoiled, and radiant vision of the south, appealed to both the curiosity associated with the provinces and the French sense of connection with the land, as well as a relief from the often-uncomfortable realities of modern life.

One particularly striking review that celebrates Rouméguère’s identity as a southern painter is that penned by critic Edouard Achard (1887-1914/17?) for the June 24, 1906 *Journal des Cubistes*. Achard described Rouméguère’s exhibition in terms of the place from which these paintings originate: “All the studies of his exhibition are of views captured in the region that extends from the Gers to the Pyrenees, and he has painted the mountain under all its aspects, at all the instants of the day and of the night.”¹¹⁸ While this description was straightforward enough, Achard offered another, declaring that “[t]he artist is from the *Midi* and the *Midi* with its hot and dazzling light sings under his paintbrush.”¹¹⁹ According to Achard, Rouméguère was a meridional painter not only in his depiction of a specific geographical region, but also in his ability to evoke an atmosphere.¹²⁰

Achard’s review is particularly noteworthy for the sensory language that the author chose: Rouméguère’s light is described as “hot” and “dazzling;” it even “sings.” Here, the critic wrote of a sensation experienced in the presence of the artwork. In the course of this research on Rouméguère, it became evident that his paintings still evoke this sort of experience today, particularly in viewers who know the region. Those who appreciate his work most seem to have

¹¹⁷ G. L., “Un Paysagiste Méridional, J.-L. Rouméguère,” *Notre Midi*, April 1, 1906. Original French: *un peintre de leur pays et pour leur pays*.

¹¹⁸ Edouard Achard, “Cercle de la Librairie: A Propos de l’Exposition J.-L. Rouméguère, de Toulouse: La Peinture Scientifique La Peinture Scientifique,” *Journal des Cubistes*, June 24, 1906. Original French: Toutes les études de son exposition sont des vues prises dans la région qui s’étend du Gers aux Pyrénées, et il a su peindre la montagne sous tous ses aspects, a tous les instants du jour et de la nuit.

¹¹⁹ Achard, “Peinture.” Original French: L’artiste est du Midi et le Midi avec sa lumière chaude et éblouissant chante sous son pinceau.

¹²⁰ Ibid.

a personal connection to these or similar landscapes—viewers who can relate the poetic, harmonious light of Rouméguère’s work to their own lived experiences. For example, as paintings were pulled from the archives for the purpose of this project, several members of the museum staff expressed interest in seeing these works that had been so long in storage. One of these staff members, a native of the Pyrenees, was especially enthralled. As one particular painting (figure 30) was unwrapped, she exclaimed, “I know that light! How does he do it?” She pointed out the way in which the evening light fell across the mountains, acting differently upon each plane, and marveled that it was “just so,” amazed that the artist’s brush could so vividly conjure the mountains of her childhood.¹²¹

The way in which Rouméguère’s paintings evoke not just an effect of light but a seemingly palpable, accessible atmosphere, aligns this artist with the concept of somatic experience in landscape painting proposed by art historian Claudia Einecke in her dissertation, “Beyond Seeing: The Somatic Experience of Landscape Painting in Mid-Century France” (1994). In this study, the term “somatic” provides a framework for understanding the way in which the artist’s facture, or handling of surface texture, encourages a more visceral, multi-sensory experience of the work—a phenomenon especially evident in landscape painting. Beginning with the painters of the Barbizon in the 1830s, the term “*verité*” began to be used to describe work by such artists as Jules Dupré (1811-1889) (figure 31).¹²²

Verité, Einecke argues, “referred not to an absolute visual quality, but rather to an effect that was experienced and verified by the viewer on a visceral level.”¹²³ *Verité* was not about

¹²¹ The described encounter happened during March 2018 during the course of my research at the *Musée des Jacobins*.

¹²² Einecke, “Beyond Seeing,” viii-viv and 112. This specific painting is not mentioned by Einecke, but demonstrates a use of texture to create a sense of motion that continued to develop in Dupré’s paintings.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, viii-viiv.

capturing a landscape in its geographical or physiological detail, although a recognizable landscape could contribute to the effect. Rather, “the viewer’s physiological response to the materiality and textures of the paintings became the criterion of authenticity for naturalist representation”—the term *vérité* denoted the sensation that the image evoked.¹²⁴ Rouméguère himself seems to have alluded to this concept in his statements that he sought to paint those scenes of nature that left him “nailed to the ground” in awe, to replicate not only the vista, but the emotive response that it inspired.¹²⁵ He also used the term “*vérité*” and the similar expression “*le sensation du vrai*,” or “sensation of truth,” calling himself “a painter particularly enamored with *la vérité*.”¹²⁶ He elaborated, explaining that “truth” in landscape actually meant a more perfect illusion: “[W]e make [the eye] plunge, there, into an imaginary space [. . .] we make it take a yellow for the sun, a black of some sort for a hole, blue or something else for the air.”¹²⁷ For Rouméguère, then, the idea of *vérité* was very much linked to the viewer’s tendency to equate painted suggestion with physical phenomena—yellow does not imply the sun, but becomes it.

The seventh painting of the *Phases of Light, Evening Sunlight (Soleil du Soir*, before 1906, figure 32), is a prime example of a painting that could be termed a somatically-evocative landscape for its brushwork and related focus on intimate, personal experience. The immediate foreground of Rouméguère’s *sous-bois* is in shadow, while a patch of bright light just beyond falls across the underbrush and the path that snakes through it. The trees and foliage on the ground are rendered roughly, the brushy, irregular texture varying from the low-growing plants

¹²⁴ Ibid., v.

¹²⁵ E. Ponvosin, “Dans les Ateliers: Chez J. -L. Rouméguère,” *Journal des Artistes*, March 19, 1908.

Original French: [. . .] cloué au sol [. . .]

¹²⁶ Rouméguère, “Conférence,” 9. Original French: [. . .] un peintre particulièrement épris de la vérité

¹²⁷ Ibid., Original French: [N]ous le faisons plonger, là, dans un vide imaginaire [. . .] nous lui faisons prendre un jaune pour du soleil, un noir quelconque pour un trou, du bleu ou autre chose pour de l’air.

to the path and the trees. In the pine around which the composition focuses and the other trees beyond it, an uneven, almost blotchy distribution of light emphasizes the roughness of the bark. The *sous-bois* was an intimate scene, a motif itself popularized by the Barbizon artists for that very quality, and the textural nature of such compositions encouraged the viewer to not only see but experience the painting.¹²⁸ Rouméguère's *Evening Sunlight* demonstrates this effect.

This same facture and evocation of personal, intimate experience is also evident in the sixth of the *Phases of Light*, *Midday Sun* (*Soleil du Midi*, before 1906, figure 33), which contains components that could easily have inspired a sweeping, sublime landscape—boulders and jagged cliffs, their contours defined by a harsh midday light, surround a *gave*, a rushing Pyrenean stream. Yet Rouméguère characteristically restrained the drama of the scene, choosing a close viewpoint—only the tiniest triangle of blue sky is visible, the ridgetop cropped—and offsetting the harshly-defined rocks with soft, bushy summer trees in the middle ground and distance. A sense of motion, of a windswept day, is suggested in the dappled light on the trees and in the way the water splits, foaming slightly, around a cluster of rocks.

This evocation of a sensory quality in his landscapes was essential to the *verité* that Rouméguère sought—evident throughout the rest of the *Phases of Light* series and forming a key component of his mature technique. The somatic experience in the presence of Rouméguère's work, then, is the quality to which Achard and other critics were likely responding when they wrote of Rouméguère's ability to capture the sensations of the *Midi*. To the viewer, Rouméguère's paintings provided a version of the meridional landscape that could be experienced sensorially, that seemed more tangibly real than an exacting, topographically-accurate rendition. So much were Rouméguère's works considered representative of his region

¹²⁸ Einecke, "Beyond Seeing," 218.

that one critic urged those planning Pyrenean voyages to view Rouméguère's show before going, as it would help them better appreciate their upcoming experience: "I imagine that the socialites who have chosen the Pyrenees for their next vacation will find great pleasure in visiting this little exhibition before their departure: they will better enjoy, perhaps, afterward, those beauties of nature that will be given them to admire."¹²⁹

Despite the importance of the Pyrenees and the *Midi* in general to his oeuvre and artistic career, Rouméguère's writings, like the titles of his paintings, focus mostly on effects of light and the process by which he achieved these. He did not write about his region, with one notable exception. When Jean de l'Hers, the one critic who negatively reviewed the *Phases of Light* at their 1905 Toulousain debut, remarked that the ten paintings depicted only scenes of the Pyrenees, implying that more varied settings would have been more impressive, Rouméguère's response was unequivocal: "The Pyrenees are not sufficient for you! What an ogre! We will give you the whole planet! Sir, an artist can find, in the two or three kilometers that surround him, enough to paint for a lifetime; nature is beautiful everywhere when one knows how to see it."¹³⁰

This declaration, offering a rare indication of Rouméguère's pride in the region that he painted, is just a small part of the artist's "Réponse du Peintre Rouméguère au Critique d'Art Jean de l'Hers." Along with his other writings, Rouméguère's "Réponse" offers little additional explanation of the artist's motifs or his relationship to the southern landscape. However, these

¹²⁹ Vicomtesse de Neville, "Une exposition particulière," *American Register*, June 18, 1906. Original French: J'imagine que les mondaines qui ont choisi les Pyrénées pour leur prochaine villégiature trouveront un grand plaisir à visiter cette petite exposition avant leur départ : elles jouiront mieux, peut-être, après, ces beautés de la nature qu'il leur sera donné d'admirer.

¹³⁰ Jean-Louis Rouméguère, "Réponse du Peintre Rouméguère au Critique d'Art Jean de l'Hers," *Critique d'Art*. (Toulouse, May 23, 1905): 3. Original French: Les Pyrénées ne sont pas suffisantes pour vous !... Quel ogre ! ...On vous servira toute la planète. Monsieur, un artiste peut trouver, dans les deux ou trois kilomètres qui l'entourent, de quoi peindre toute la vie ; la nature est belle partout quand on sait la voir.

documents do provide extensive information about the methodology the artist used to evoke the *Midi*'s "hot and dazzling light," as examined in detail in the following chapter.¹³¹

¹³¹ Achard, "Peinture."

CHAPTER IV: Rouméguère's Technique

Section A: The Writings of J.-L. Rouméguère: "Réponse du Peintre Rouméguère au Critique d'Art Jean de l'Hers," and "Conférence sur une Tentative de Peinture Scientifique"

Though some thought it petty at the time, Rouméguère's biting "Réponse du Peintre Rouméguère au Critique d'Art Jean de l'Hers" today serves as an invaluable firsthand explanation of the ideas and goals behind Rouméguère's artistic decisions.¹³² Among the artist's varied writings, this and one other document, his "Conférence sur une Tentative de Peinture Scientifique"—an introduction to his methodology as presented at his 1906 exhibition—are of particular use in understanding the process and principles that governed his work. Each of these documents also coincides with a key moment of Rouméguère's career: "Conférence sur une Tentative de Peinture Scientifique" was released during the artist's only solo show, while "Réponse du Peintre Rouméguère au Critique d'Art Jean de l'Hers" was penned at the very beginning of Rouméguère's professional career.

When Rouméguère at last decided to introduce his work to the public at the 1905 *Salon de l'Union Artistique* in Toulouse, his series of paintings was not honored with an optimal location—in fact, they were relegated to a relatively poorly-lit spot near a stairway.¹³³ Even there, however, contemporary accounts describe the *Phases of Light* as a work that captured the attention of the public—with the exception of Jean de l'Hers.¹³⁴ Writing in *L'Art Meridional*, the critic dedicated just one small paragraph of a larger review of the exhibition to his rather dismissive critique of Rouméguère's work, but that was enough to garner the artist's ire. In

¹³² V. Saint-Prez., "Artistes et Critiques," *L'Express du Midi*, June 6, 1905. This critic admired Rouméguère's work but found fault with him berating Jean de l'Hers—and felt that handing out "thousands" of these fliers was a bit extreme.

¹³³ Brel-Bordaz, "La Donation Rouméguère," 78.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 80.

response, Rouméguère wrote and published a scathing multi-page rebuttal defending his work and tearing apart his critic phrase by phrase—then proceeded to hand it out to any exhibition-goer who would take it.¹³⁵ Thus, the debut of the *Phases of Light* marked not only the start of Rouméguère's mature career, but also the realization of his first written exposé on his method.

Rouméguère's response to de l'Hers provides more insight into his philosophy of painting than perhaps any of the artists' other writings, both repudiating the critic and setting forth his working paradigm, beginning with a series of thirteen criteria that the artist had used to guide his creation of the *Phases of Light*:

- 1) To represent in its gradations, in ten paintings, the phases of light
[. . .]:
- 1) To choose, as much as the moment permits, the sources of light in the skies, and overcome, if possible, this difficulty;
- 2) The atmosphere of the hour will be plainly felt;
- 3) The paintings will be very small, many [exhibition] rooms not possessing an equal [distribution of] light over a large surface. For it is indispensable that the daylight be dispersed very evenly;
- 4) Make it be forgotten that they are small; the sensation of the Grand will be given all the same by the character;
- 5) The work will be absolutely conscientious and neither the most scrupulous truth nor any finesse will ever be sacrificed to the effect;
- 6) The effect will always necessitate all of the values of the palette;
- 7) It should represent the greatest intensities of light;
- 8) But these intensities will be chosen in the most harmonious and most seductive ranges;
- 9) The proximity of a work, far from negating another, must to the contrary increase its value;
- 10) The atmospheric perspective must have a very great importance and will be strongly developed.
- 11) Nothing will be neglected; but, on the contrary, despite the smallness, everything will be developed to the fullest in drawing as in color;
- 12) The author must never lose sight of the fact that it is not only [technical] difficulty that he must overcome. He must put, in each painting, all of his sentiment, so that all of his emotion emerges from the work; art should move rather than astonish.¹³⁶

¹³⁵ Saint-Prez., "Artistes et Critiques."

¹³⁶ Jean-Louis Rouméguère, "Réponse du Peintre Rouméguère au Critique d'Art Jean de l'Hers," *Critique d'Art*, (Toulouse, May 23, 1905):1-2.

In these thirteen rules and the ten paintings they defended, Rouméguère demonstrated his artistic development, establishing himself as an aspiring professional with a series of standards to which he held his work, not just an amateur gifted in copying from nature. Though some of these thirteen guidelines applied specifically to the *Phases of Light*—number seven, for example, “[t]he effect will always necessitate all of the values of the palette”—the majority are applicable to most or all of Rouméguère’s larger oeuvre.¹³⁷ The concepts expressed here continued to shape Rouméguère’s style throughout the course of his career: “never sacrifice truth,” “art should move,” and light effects should be chosen from the “most harmonious and seductive ranges.”¹³⁸

After expounding upon the series of criteria he had set for his art, Rouméguère dissected de l’Hers’ critique nearly word-by-word. The critic had written: “Mr. Rouméguère has attempted to render, in ten paintings, all of the Phases of Light [. . .]. The intention is excellent. But the success is mediocre. First, it concerns the same country, the Pyrenees; the same season, summer;

Original French: 1) Représenter dans sa gradation, en 10 tableaux, les phases de la lumière: aube, aurore, lever du soleil, le matin, soleil du matin, soleil de midi, soleil du soir, coucher de soleil, le crépuscule.
 2) Choisir, autant que le moment le permet, les foyers de lumière, dans les ciels, et vaincre, si possible, cette difficulté ;
 3) L’atmosphère de l’heure sera nettement sentie ;
 4) Les tableaux seront très petits, biens des salles ne possédant pas une lumière égale sur une grande surface. Or il est indispensable que le jour soit reparti très également ;
 5) Faire oublier qu’ils sont petits ; la sensation du Grand sera donnée quand même par le caractère ;
 6) L’œuvre sera absolument consciencieuse et la vérité la plus scrupuleuse ni aucune finesse ne seront jamais sacrifiées à l’effet.
 7) L’effet devra toujours nécessiter toutes les valeurs de la palette ;
 8) Il devra représenter les plus grandes intensités de lumière ;
 9) Mais ces intensités seront choisies dans les gammes les plus harmonieuses et les plus séduisantes ;
 10) Le voisinage de l’une des toiles, loin de nuire à une autre, devra au contraire la faire valoir ;
 11) La perspective aérienne devra avoir une très grande importance et sera fort développée ;
 12) Rien ne sera néglige ; mais, au contraire, malgré la petitesse, tout sera poussé à fond tant dans le dessin que dans la couleur ;
 13) L’auteur ne devra jamais perdre de vue que ce n’est pas seulement la difficulté qu’il doit vaincre. Il devra mettre, dans chaque tableau, tout son sentiment, afin qu’il se dégage de l’œuvre toute son émotion, l’art devant émouvoir bien plus qu’étonner.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

the same stylistic manner, classicism. It is honest, but of a uniform execution, without the mobility of impression and the dexterity of hand that would have been necessary to render the aspects, so different, of place and hour.”¹³⁹

Rouméguère’s response, as well as showcasing the artist’s rather intense personality, underscores his characteristically methodical and highly independent approach. In dismantling de l’Hers’ critique, Rouméguère demonstrated that what the critic seemed to view as a too-narrow focus was exactly the point of the work, as the artist sought to represent consecutive phases of light within the same “atmosphere”—thereby necessitating limitations of place, time, and style. As to his choice of location, the Pyrenees were amply sufficient. As to the season, Rouméguère queried: “Would you like by chance that in a succession of effects I mix the seasons? You should know however that with them varies the height of the sun. How to make six o’clock in the morning, in winter, follow five o’clock in the morning, in summer; it would be necessary to repeat the dawn after the sunrise.”¹⁴⁰ And as to style, Rouméguère asserted his independence with some of his most revealing remarks: “I have the truth for my school and I have no desire to know if I belong, at the same time, to another. Ancient or modern prejudices don’t interest me and I wish to always continue to ignore them.”¹⁴¹

In reality, of course, Rouméguère was not creating in a vacuum, and his work reveals that he was indeed affected by the styles of his day and the innovations of his predecessors.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 1. Original French: M. Rouméguère a cherché à rendre, en dix tableaux, toutes les *Phases de la lumière*[. . .] L’intention est excellente. Mais la réussite est médiocre. D’abord, il s’agit du même pays, les Pyrénées ; de la même saison, l’été ; du même procédé d’école, le classicisme. C’est honnête, mais d’une exécution uniforme, sans la mobilité d’impression et la dextérité de main qu’il aurait fallu pour rendre des aspects, si différents, de lieu et d’heure....

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 4. Original French: Voudriez-vous par hasard que dans une *succession* des effets je mélange les saisons ? Vous devriez savoir pourtant qu’avec elles varie la hauteur de l’astre. Comment faire succéder six heures du matin, hiver, a cinq heures du matin, été ; il faudrait vous redonner l’aube après le lever du soleil.

¹⁴¹ Ibid. Original French: *J’ai pour école la vérité* et je n’ai cure de savoir si j’appartiens, en même temps, a quelque autre. Les préjuges anciens ou modernes ne m’intéressent pas et je veux continuer à les ignorer toujours.

Nevertheless, this avowal of independence and the principles laid out in his response are those of the mature artist, worked out over the approximately twenty years that separate his early paintings of the 1880s and 1890s from the *Phases of Light* in 1905. Any change in Rouméguère's technique over the remainder of his career is relatively minor when compared to this early period of great stylistic development; from this point forward, it is less instructive to discuss the stylistic evolution of Rouméguère's work than to examine to what lengths the artist pushed the guiding principles established within his response to de l'Hers.

It was in the glow of his success at the *Salon* in Toulouse that Rouméguère left his dental practice and his hometown to attempt to build a career in Paris.¹⁴² As the exhibition of the *Phases of Light* had given him a reason to reveal something of his rationale, so his show at the *Cercle de la Librairie* in 1906 furnished Rouméguère an opportunity to expound upon his method. Together, the one hundred fifty-six paintings showcasing his harmonious, light-filled depictions of France's southwest and his accompanying presentation were a demonstration of his technique and the reasoning behind it.

The mastery of myriad atmospheric effects that Rouméguère displayed in his mature work developed alongside his theories of painting and the use of color; the difficulty that his method attempted to overcome was a common concern of landscape painters working *en plein air*—the astonishing rapidity with which the quality of light could change.¹⁴³ Art historian Anthea Callen describes this struggle in her study on the history of *plein air* painting:

How do you record, using a time-consuming, messy material process like oil painting, the *appearance* of an instant, a passing

¹⁴² Brel-Bordaz, "La Donation Rouméguère," 80.

¹⁴³ Rouméguère seems to have painted both *en plein air* and in the studio. Given the evidence of Rouméguère's drawings, his statements about the impossibility of quickly capturing effects, his development of a methodical approach, and photographs of the artist in his studio, it seems likely that he spent more time in the studio later in his career. Mme. Madeleine Boyer stated that Rouméguère would spend hours observing nature, then return to the studio to paint.

effect of ephemeral light and weather observed on the motif in nature? [. . .] The recommended times throughout the [nineteenth] century for capturing different light effects ranged from two hours to 20 or 30 minutes maximum for sunsets and dawn.¹⁴⁴

In 1889, artist Ernest Hareux (1847-1909) stressed the importance of capturing effects of light in a single sitting, as quickly as possible, for no matter how rapidly the artist might work, “the clouds will always have been displaced by the wind and the sun moved, lighting them differently [. . .] it is no longer possible to compare what one saw previously with what one sees a quarter of an hour later.”¹⁴⁵ Rouméguère observed that the time frame could actually be much smaller, especially in the case of the most fleeting effects; a sunset, for example, was not a thirty-minute period in which nature held a continuous state, but an inherently unstable condition in which “most of its effects don’t last two minutes.”¹⁴⁶

For many artists—notably, the Impressionists—the solution to this difficulty was simply to paint, to observe constantly and carefully the ways in which different effects of light acted upon the landscape. Through study and observation, the artist would become familiar with natural effects and gradually become better able to capture them in the allotted time, skillfully edit work after the first session, or even recreate from memory. Corot expressed the importance of fixing the impression of a scene within the mind, allowing this to shape the completed image: “We must never forget to envelope reality in the atmosphere it had when it burst upon our view. Whatever the site, whatever the object, the artist should submit his first impression.”¹⁴⁷ The ability to capture that moment of first impression is what Rouméguère, too, sought—but he was not content to rely on memory and observation alone, instead seeking a method that would allow

¹⁴⁴ Anthea Callen, *The Work of Art: Plein Air Painting and Artistic Identity in Nineteenth-Century France* (London: Reaktion Books Ltd., 2015), 224.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 222.

¹⁴⁶ Rouméguère, “Conférence,” 13. Original French: La plupart de ses effets ne durent pas deux minutes.

¹⁴⁷ Malcolm Andrews, *Landscape and Western Art*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 192.

him to capture or recreate any effect that he desired, even if it were gone before he could open his paintbox.

Rouméguère presented and published his “Conférence sur une Tentative de Peinture Scientifique” in conjunction with his *Cercle de la Librairie* exhibition in 1906, making the booklet available to visitors of the exhibition.¹⁴⁸ Though it is not possible to verify how closely the artist’s lecture matched the written version, the “Conférence” reads like a presentation, complete with references to paintings that Rouméguère used to demonstrate his techniques. The booklet contains no images; however, as noted, these paintings remain in the museum’s collection and are easily identified based on Rouméguère’s descriptions and his 1906 exhibition guide. Thus, this thesis restores to Rouméguère’s “Conférence” the visual images *Effect of Morning in the Mountains* (figure 12) and the series of small, loose studies (figure 34) created as demonstration pieces.

The “Conférence” is not a complete explanation of Rouméguère’s technique. Such a document was never compiled, but the published booklet explains the main tenets of the artist’s method and provides additional insight into what exactly Rouméguère hoped to achieve with this technique. Woven among the technical details is Rouméguère’s personal philosophy of landscape. In his “Réponse du Peintre Rouméguère au Critic d’Art Jean de l’Hers,” the artist emphasized the concept of grandeur over drama and stated that art should generate emotion; in “Conférence sur une Tentative de la Peinture Scientifique,” these ideas were united into two overarching concepts—harmony and *vérité*. In one revealing passage, for example, Rouméguère described the way in which his methodology, by allowing him to create the effects he sought, served as the means by which he could consistently convey a sense of “truth” and “harmony”:

¹⁴⁸ Achard, “Peinture.”

[. . .] I can affirm that, without the aid of these rules on which I have relied, it would not have been possible, for any given case, to obtain, with certitude, the maximum power, all the possible development of aerial perspective, the true atmosphere particular to each light, the maximum light reconcilable with the sensation of truth, the harmony of tones in shadow and in light.¹⁴⁹

Though it might seem that the use of such a studied method would decrease the somatic element of an artwork, art historian Malcolm Andrews argues that this is not necessarily the case:

The high value placed on a primitive sensational response to the natural world did not preclude a sophisticated technical sense of how to draft those responses without comprising their primitive freshness. Authenticity in landscape art, in these terms, is a transcription not of ‘nature,’ but of subjective responses.”¹⁵⁰

This idea that landscape is essentially a construct, not a duplication of nature but an attempt to represent one’s interpretation of it or to replicate its effects, is essential to an understanding of the genre and its development. As art historian Mark Roskill writes, “The two most fundamental features of landscape art, over time and across different cultures, are that it works by dint of compression and distillation, and that it sets up a quality of resonance in the viewer’s mind.”¹⁵¹ In Roumégère’s case, that resonance is largely established through his facture and his portrayal of radiant light, while “compression and distillation” are the results of his method, allowing him to capture even the most transient effects of light in ways that would appear “true” to the viewer, yet would also have an absolute sense of harmony—no tone out of place.

¹⁴⁹ Roumégère, “Conférence,” 20. Original French: [J]e peux affirmer que, sans le secours des règles sur lesquelles je me suis appuyé, il ne m’eût pas été possible, pour un cas donné, d’obtenir, avec certitude, le maximum de la puissance, tout le développement possible de la perspective aérienne, la véritable atmosphère particulière à chaque lumière, le maximum de lumière conciliable avec la sensation du vrai, l’harmonie des tons dans l’ombre et dans la lumière.

¹⁵⁰ Andrews, *Landscape*, 192.

¹⁵¹ Mark Roskill, *The Languages of Landscape* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1997), 4.

Rouméguère's decision to privilege harmony in his work ultimately also affects the way in which the concept of *verité* applies to his paintings. Given the same facture, but more dramatic composition and intense or arbitrary coloring, Rouméguère's paintings would read quite differently—the two concepts are interdependent. Part of the “sentiment” that Rouméguère strove to capture, that he stated an artist “must put, in each painting,” is the gentle but profound serenity evoked by the harmony of his effects, as in the fifth of Rouméguère's *Phases of Light, Morning Sunlight (Soleil du Matin*, before 1906, figure 35), in which a combination of horizontal forms and a soft sunlit glow convey peacefulness and calm.

In addition to serving as Rouméguère's rationale for the method by which he achieved a certain harmony of effect, “Conférence sur une Tentative de Peinture Scientifique” could also be described as a practical color theory—an attempt to codify the relationships between colors and explain how these could be understood and exploited by the painter. For an example of how color relationships might be more accurately described, Rouméguère looked to music, contrasting the language of the musician with that of the visual artist. Music, he posited, was much more advanced in this area, largely due to a specialized vocabulary that allowed it to be intelligently and, compared to art, precisely discussed.¹⁵² Art borrowed some basic terms from this vocabulary but did not have any truly comparable language of its own. A musician might discuss an E chord or a key of C, a triad, a staccato, a flat, a sharp, and any other musician would know exactly what this referenced, but there was no equivalent level of communication recognized by painters. Rouméguère saw his theory as a step towards a similarly rational, systematic approach to color.

¹⁵² Rouméguère, “Conférence,” 10.

Though Roumégère recognized the lack of a standard, adequately-nuanced language pertaining to color, such as that used to classify notes and tones within music, he did not go so far as to invent such a system himself.¹⁵³ In fact, the artist's vocabulary within his "Conférence" is rather vague, relying on a few key terms. Roumégère typically used "*couleur*" to mean "hue"—a pure pigment—although this term sometimes has a more general meaning, referring to color in general, pure or mixed. "*Ton*," or tone, refers to any mixed or impure color—Roumégère's tones were highly prepared, in contrast to the preference for pure colors that was common among the Impressionist and Neo-Impressionist movements. "*Tonalité*," or tonality, indicates a grouping of tones used to create a certain effect. Roumégère referred to a "lightest possible tonality," for example, in which all of the tones were just one step removed from white: "I begin with the first element: the white and I compose a tonality [*tonalité*] where all the tones [*tons*] are as close as possible to white, all possessing the coloration that they should have for what they represent."¹⁵⁴ He also referenced the need for at least two separate tonalities if one wanted to convey a convincing effect of sunlight—one tonality for the light and one for the shadow.¹⁵⁵ "*Blanc*" and "*noir*" are used not only for actual white and black, but also in reference to the lightest and darkest tones within a given tonality. To describe the proximity of a tone to white—its lightness—Roumégère used the word "*claire*," while "saturated" was expressed as "*coloré*." "*Gamme*" and "*échelle*" refer to the chromatic scale; that is, all of the colors available to the artist comprise his longest possible scale, while restricting the palette to a smaller range of consecutive tones creates more limited, dark or light scales.

¹⁵³ Roumégère, "Conférence," 23.

¹⁵⁴ Roumégère, "Conférence," 5. Original French: Je pars du premier terme: le blanc et je compose une tonalité aussi claire que possible, c'est-à-dire une tonalité où tous les tons soient aussi voisins que possible du blanc, tout en possédant la coloration qu'ils doivent avoir pour ce qu'ils représentent.

¹⁵⁵ Roumégère also occasionally used "*harmonie*" as synonymous with the way in which "*tonalité*" is described here, though it is more often used to refer to a quality of the painting as a whole.

Roumégère began his explanation of his method by stating: “In a painting, the sensation of a color does not exist except by rapport with others.”¹⁵⁶ He recognized that this was known by all painters but asserted that such relationships could be established by reason rather than relying on trial and error. Since the painter’s palette was limited to available pigments, it therefore must have an absolute highest and absolute lowest tone.¹⁵⁷ Such limits meant that an artist’s colors and the relationships between them were quantifiable—hence a “scientific” method.

For Roumégère, codifying color relationships was important as it would allow the artist to more easily equate the colors of his palette to those observed in the natural world. Furthermore, it was only when an artist understood his limits that he might overcome them. With only a set range of available colors, which could only yield a set range of possible tones, how could one simulate the seemingly infinite effects of nature? The answer, Roumégère believed, was in establishing a proportional relationship between the color spectrum of the observed scene in nature and those tones physically available to the artist: “*in relating the effects to our means* we are able, if we know these well, to give the sensation of the majority of [nature’s] effects.”¹⁵⁸

Thus, Roumégère posited that the eye would recognize an image as faithful to nature or harmonious not when each individual tone was replicated, but when proportional equivalency was maintained.¹⁵⁹ Many mid-tones might be eliminated and the effect of harmony and truth to nature conserved if those tones that the artist did represent were in correct relationship with one another. Any observed scene would have tones that the artist could recognize as being lightest

¹⁵⁶ Roumégère, “Conférence,” 2. Original French: Dans un tableau, la sensation d’une couleur n’existe que par rapport aux autres.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., 2-3.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 6. Original French: [. . .] *en rapportant les effets à nos moyens* nous pouvons si nous connaissons bien ceux-ci donner la sensation de la plupart de ces effets.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid., 8-10.

and darkest, most and least saturated.¹⁶⁰ Thus, the artist could begin by choosing or mixing the closest possible equivalents—the “black” and “white” within the closed world of that particular image—thereby establishing the tonal range of the painting.¹⁶¹ Depending on the effect desired, the artist might choose to utilize the entire range of the palette—the darkest available dark and the lightest available light, with a variety of in-between tones—or to restrict himself to a much shorter scale. Any tone that did not fall within the chosen extremes was to be scrupulously avoided.

According to Rouméguère’s method, a painting was conceived of at least one but possibly several groups of interrelated tones, or tonalities—much as a song has at least one key but may shift between several. Many paintings required two or more tonalities in order to achieve a desired effect. To convey the illusion of sunlight, for example, Rouméguère would compose at least one tonality for the lighted areas and another for those that were shadowed.¹⁶² This is evident in the fifth of the *Phases of Light*, *Midday Sun* (figure 33), in which the intense light creates very distinct sunlight and shadows, necessitating different tonalities. Rouméguère determined the “white” and “black” of each tonality within the painting, and, once these ranges were established, he relied on a process of “transposition,” which he defined: “The colors are transposed when those that compose a passage have all followed the same movement.”¹⁶³ This process would ensure that each tone was in correct relationship within the painting as a whole. “We can see how one can find the coloration that they should have according to the plane, the distance, the atmosphere, and the light, each of these factors bringing about a modification,” he

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 6.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 5.

¹⁶² Ibid., 19.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 8. Original French: Les couleurs sont transposées quand toutes celles qui composent un morceau ont suivi le même mouvement.

wrote.¹⁶⁴ In *Midday Sun*, for example, the boulder in the left foreground, split between sun and shade, provides an example of how Rouméguère “transposed” his colors considering plane and light. The tones of the shaded area are not only darker, but also slightly cooler than those of the sunlit area, and the light strikes most harshly on the surfaces perpendicular to the picture plane, with other areas of the rock darkened in accordance with the degree at which each plane is angled. Through this process, Rouméguère could be certain of achieving an effect that read as sufficiently naturalistic yet harmonious.

What is somewhat baffling about Rouméguère’s method is his insistence, and many critics’ agreement, that this was unique.¹⁶⁵ Color theories and ideas of correspondence between the visual and musical arts were abundant in early twentieth-century Europe and had been for some time. Isaac Newton (1643-1727) had pinpointed seven colors, likely with the seven notes of the musical scale in mind. Johann Wolfgang van Goethe (1749-1832) had written his theories of color nearly a century earlier. Color study had gained rapid ground in the nineteenth century with theorists such as Michel Eugène Chevreul (1786-1889), whose writings on the subject were hugely influential in the mid- and late-nineteenth century, and Ogden Rood (1831-1902), whose *Modern Chromatics* was published in 1879 and translated into French shortly thereafter. The celebrated critic and textbook author Charles Blanc (1813-1882), in his 1867 publication *Grammaire des arts du dessin*, argued that the Salon’s insistence that color could not be taught was misguided—just as Rouméguère insisted forty years later.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 5. Original French: Nous pourrions voir comment on peut trouver la coloration qu’ils doivent avoir selon le plan, la distance, l’atmosphère, la lumière, chacun de ces facteurs apportant une modification.

¹⁶⁵ Critical responses to Rouméguère’s work are explored in more detail in the following chapter.

¹⁶⁶ John Gage, *Color and Culture: Practice and Meaning from Antiquity to Abstraction*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), 174.

The only color theorist of his day that Rouméguère mentioned, and then only in passing, is Chevreul, whose name makes an appearance at the very end of one of Rouméguère's articles, the "Troisième Note, suite," in the *Journal des Artistes*. In this article, Rouméguère primarily discussed the use of complementaries in shadows, arguing that artists who used exact complementaries, not taking into consideration the color of reflected light without which the shadow would be black, were committing an error in both painting and reasoning. Rouméguère seems to have viewed such considerations as an extension of or modification to Chevreul's method, stating, "However, all of this does not mean that there is nothing to take from the important discoveries of Chevreul; quite the opposite, but, in everything, logic is necessary."¹⁶⁷ Thus, whether or not Rouméguère knew of Chevreul at the time of writing his "Conférence," and whether or not he had read *De la Loi du Contrast Simultané des Couleurs* in its entirety, the artist was familiar with Chevreul's theories when he published his series of articles for *Le Journal des Artistes* in 1907. Indeed, it would have been nearly impossible for Rouméguère not to have known of Chevreul, who had been head of the *Manufacture des Gobelins*, the celebrated tapestry manufactory beside Rouméguère's Parisian home, from 1824 until 1883. Rouméguère's supporter Gustave Geffroy was Chevreul's successor.

Rouméguère never stated what, if any, parts of his method were inspired by Chevreul's writings; however, there are a number of similarities between the two. Most striking, perhaps, is the discussion of harmony. Chevreul wrote in depth of the elements that together create a sense of harmony, both in color and composition, and a key component of his theory are his "Harmonies of Analogous Colours"—harmony of scale, harmony of hue, and harmony of a

¹⁶⁷ Jean-Louis Rouméguère, "La Peinture Scientifique: Essai sur l'harmonie en Peinture: Troisième Note (suite)," *Le Journal des Artistes*, May 12, 1907, 5430. Original French: Cependant tout cela ne veut pas dire qu'il n'y ait aucun parti à tirer des importantes découvertes de Chevreul ; au contraire, mais, en tout, il faut de la logique.

dominant colored light—and “Harmonies of Contrast”—harmony of contrast of scale, harmony of contrast of hues, and harmony of contrast of colors.¹⁶⁸ Notably, Rouméguère later used the term “*gamme*,” or scale, in the same way that Chevreul did, to refer to a sequence of contiguous tones.¹⁶⁹

It also seems likely that Rouméguère knew at least something of the writings of Rood, and Rouméguère’s discussion of color intensity and luminosity is similar to Rood’s concepts of purity, luminosity, and hue.¹⁷⁰ One passage from Rood’s book, in particular, expresses ideas very similar to Rouméguère’s:

Good colour depends greatly on what may be called the chromatic composition of the picture. The plan for this should be most carefully considered and worked out beforehand, even with reference to minor details; the colours should be selected and arranged so that they all help each other by sympathy or by contrast—so that no one could be altered or spared without sensibly impairing the general effect [. . .] . [A]ll the colours may be made paler and more greyish than those of nature; yet if they retain their proper relations, if all are correspondingly affected, the harmony will not be disturbed, and a design of this character will still be, from a chromatic point of view, logical.¹⁷¹

Where Rood’s description differs significantly from that of Rouméguère is that he claimed these color harmonies had to be worked out through observance of nature, that they could not be governed by a rule.¹⁷² If Rouméguère did know of and read Rood’s work, perhaps this would explain his conviction that his method was the first of its kind. However, Rouméguère never cited Rood directly.

¹⁶⁸ M.E. Chevreul, *The Principles of Harmony and Contrast of Colours, and their Applications to the Arts*, tran. Charles Martel (London: George Bell and Sons, 1908): xliii-xliv.

¹⁶⁹ Chevreul, *Contraste Simultané*.

¹⁷⁰ Ogden Rood, *Modern Chromatics*, (New York: D. Appleby and Company, 1881), 39.

¹⁷¹ Rood, *Modern Chromatics*, 316-317.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 316.

The only other name mentioned in connection with Rouméguère's method, not by the artist himself, but in the editor's introduction to the first of Rouméguère's articles in the *Journal des Artistes*, was Jean-Phillippe Rameau (1683-1764), the famed eighteenth-century composer and music theorist.¹⁷³ While Rouméguère's "Conférence" and articles on the harmony of color in painting did not approach the level of depth found in Rameau's *Traité de l'harmonie réduite à ses principes naturels* (1722), Rouméguère did seem to advocate for an equivalent theory of color to be written. Rouméguère described his "Conférence" as small step towards understanding color as musicians did sound, and the artist's writings were heavily steeped in the language of music—"there are different tonalities, changes of tonality, in the same painting; accidentals, intervals, transposition, etc."¹⁷⁴ Despite Rouméguère's emphasis on musical terminology, however, he did not attempt to directly link musical notes to specific colors, as some theorists, such as Louis-Bertrand Castel (1688-1757) had, nor to equate musical scales note-for-note with color tonalities.¹⁷⁵ Rather, Rouméguère advocated for a separate but comparable system of classification for the visual arts.

The language used in the introductions of Rouméguère's "Conférence" and Rameau's treatise is strikingly similar, lending credence to the idea that Rouméguère pictured himself as a sort of would-be Rameau of the visual arts. "[T]he light of reason," Rameau stated, "dispelling the doubts into which experience can plunge us at any moment, will be the most certain

¹⁷³ Georges Meusnier, "Notule: Harmonie: Musique-Peinture," *Journal des Artistes*, February 10, 1907.

¹⁷⁴ Rouméguère, "Conférence," 12. Original French: Il y a des tonalités différentes, des changements de tonalité dans le même tableau, des accidents, des intervalles, de la transposition, etc., etc.

¹⁷⁵ Gage, *Color*, 233. Castel attempted to create an ocular harpsicord with twelve hues of twelve nuances each, though it was never built as he described. G.G. Guyot designed a similar instrument in 1769, which may actually have been fabricated.

guarantee of success that we can expect in this art”—an emphasis on analysis over mere observation that would certainly have resonated with Rouméguère.¹⁷⁶

In composing “Conférence sur une Tentative de Peinture Scientifique” and his articles, Rouméguère’s interests were first and foremost those of a painter, not a philosopher or scientist—Chevreul and Rood, for instance, were interested in the perception of color as a natural phenomenon. Both theorists addressed painting, but only as one field that might benefit from their research. Rouméguère, on the other hand, focused almost exclusively on the practical application of his method—the science of how color was perceived by the eye was of little use to him. What was important was that the eye could be made to equate a few tones with the much fuller range of color present in nature—so long as those limited tones were correctly proportioned. Rouméguère expressed the desire that such ideas might aid young painters in mastering the use of color more quickly, avoiding the difficulty of being involuntarily too “gray or yellow, dark or pale” and allowing them to develop their art more fully.¹⁷⁷

Two aspects of Rouméguère’s methods and techniques make them difficult to completely analyze in relation to those of other artists and theorists; first is the fact that his methodology is presented piecemeal through his “Conférence” and series of articles in the *Journal des Artistes*, but never written out in its entirety.¹⁷⁸ The 1907 articles do build upon the “Conférence,” but do not complete it; they often read as a series of practical hints and tips from which it is difficult to fully reconstruct the artist’s method, and it seems that Rouméguère did not complete them as he had envisioned. The last of these articles published, the “Quatrième Note,” is marked as the end

¹⁷⁶ Jean-Philippe Rameau, *Treatise on Harmony*, tran. Philip Gossett (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1971), 38.

¹⁷⁷ Rouméguère, “Conférence,” 20-22.

¹⁷⁸ Rouméguère, “Notes Biographiques,” 1.

of the first part of the series—yet no other articles were ever written.¹⁷⁹ Secondly, Roumégère seems to have struggled to put certain elements of his method into words. Key parts of his theory remain somewhat vague, such as how one might determine the number of “tonalités” necessary to create a given effect. In the same article in which he mentioned Chevreul, Roumégère noted that his method might really only be understood through demonstration. Referring to a hypothetical painting that he had been describing to the viewer, he stated:

We will find, in the painting, the impression that we have had, only in taking account of the intrinsic color of the wall, the plane, the value of the shadow, the more-or-less blue harmony given by the reflection of the sky, opposed to the more-or-less red [harmony] of the setting sun. This very complex question with this quintuple point of view necessitates demonstrations that cannot be given except with the support of the palette.¹⁸⁰

Despite these limitations, Roumégère’s “Conférence” was hailed by the *Cercle de la Librairie* as potentially advantageous for those interested in the color reproduction of works of art or book illustration, and the artist’s nomination to the *Ordre des Palmes Académiques* was likely related to the perceived usefulness of his methodology for art instruction.¹⁸¹ What if any impact Roumégère’s “Conférence” did have in these areas is impossible to determine; however, the potential of his technique is best demonstrated by his own artwork—including those paintings discussed within the text itself. Roumégère extensively referenced one of the largest paintings on display at his show, *Effect of Morning in the Mountains*, describing the way in

¹⁷⁹ Jean-Louis Roumégère, “La Peinture Scientifique: Essai sur l’Harmonie en Peinture: Quatrième Note,” *Journal des Artistes*, June 23, 1907, 5473

¹⁸⁰ Roumégère, “Troisième Note, suite,” 5430. Original French: Nous retrouverons, sur le tableau, l’impression que nous avons eue, en ne tenant compte que de la couleur intrinsèque du mur, du plan, de la valeur de l’ombre, de l’harmonie plus ou moins bleue donnée par les reflets du ciel, opposée à celle du soleil couchant plus ou moins rouge. Cette question très complexe à ce quintuple point de vue, nécessite des démonstrations qui ne peuvent être faites qu’avec l’appui de la palette.

¹⁸¹ “J. -L. Roumégère: Une Révélation Artistique,” *La Librairie*, June 15, 1906. The *Palmes Académiques* were awarded for cultural and educational contributions; it seems likely that Roumégère’s was his method, though I have found no direct statement to this effect.

which he determined the tones of the sky, as well as his decision to depict the particular moment in which foreground details would be visible within the backlit mountain scene—a very precise and technically-challenging moment to capture.¹⁸² This painting also allowed him to explain his use of emerald green to increase the luminosity of the sky that transitioned from yellow at the horizon to blue. Rouméguère noted that the mixing of yellow and blue often resulted in a slightly dull tone due to the imperfections of the pigments (ultramarine tends slightly towards purple, for example). Using pure green as an intermediary would avoid this effect and suggest a more luminous yellow than was actually available.¹⁸³

Rouméguère also referred to his series of small, rough oil sketches, framed together, that he prepared to illustrate specific points, such as the ability of one tone to present as entirely different colors in different situations, since each tone is affected by those around it. Rouméguère informed his viewers that the green of the trees in the lower left painting and the purple of the mountains in the lower right were in fact the same gray—demonstrating the perception of color as dependent upon its surroundings, a phenomenon comparable to the changed perception of a note within a major or minor scale (figure 36).¹⁸⁴

An evaluation of Rouméguère's larger oeuvre demonstrates the way in which such concepts were used to achieve a nuanced and varied range of effects. The artist's understanding of the proportional relationships of colors and the "transposition" of colors according to set criteria demonstrate a concept of landscape that went beyond mere observation. In addition, Rouméguère maintained throughout his writings that the technical aspects of his method would

¹⁸² Rouméguère, "Conférence," 13-19.

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*, 15.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 7-8. To verify this claim, I printed a photograph of the two images and placed a cut-out section of the tree onto the mountain, confirming that the two tones are indeed the same.

be of little use if he failed to convey emotion and sensation.¹⁸⁵ Melding the concept of harmony with that of *vérité*, imbued with a near-palpable sense of atmosphere, his most successful mature works, then, are those in which his method allowed the artist to create compositions less “scientific” than poetic.

Section B: Capturing an Atmosphere

In a 1908 interview with art critic E. Ponvosin, Roumégère made his most fervent declaration of what he hoped to achieve in his work:

I have but one goal: to find in my work the purity and the violence of sentiment that invaded me when, in Nature’s presence, admiration nailed me to the ground, unable to move, in a fever of devotion. Oh! Above all, nothing more, because any other thing could not but diminish this!¹⁸⁶

Evaluation of the stylistic change from Roumégère’s early to his mature works demonstrates the advancements in both craft and concept that brought the artist closer to this goal; analysis of his later works demonstrates the fusion of harmony and *vérité*, a sureness in both color and facture, that yields the luminous, somatic landscapes for which he was celebrated.

Most of Roumégère’s extant paintings were completed in the last twenty or twenty-five years of his career, from the beginning of the twentieth century until his death in 1925; the collections of the *Musée des Jacobins* and Madeleine Boyer contain only a handful of early works. A few were dated by the artist in the 1880s and 1890s; others can reasonably be assigned to the same time period by way of stylistic similarity. One of these early works, referred to in the museum database as a “painting representing an isolated house in the country, situated in the

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 17.

¹⁸⁶ Ponvosin, “Ateliers.” Original French: Je n’ai qu’un but ; retrouver dans mon œuvre la pureté et la violence du sentiment qui m’a envahi lorsque, en présence de la Nature, l’admiration m’a cloué au sol, immobile, dans une fièvre de dévotion. Oh ! surtout, rien de plu, parce que toute autre chose ne peut que diminuer cela !

center of the painting, behind an embankment planted with trees” (figure 37), is a quaint, quiet, fairly unremarkable country scene dated 1889, when the artist was living and working in Belgium. A comparison of this image with one of the paintings from the *Phases of Light* illuminates the development of Rouméguère’s technique.

The “house in the country” displays a number of characteristics common to the artist’s work throughout his career. It is a simple rural scene, as are most of Rouméguère’s works. Human presence is indicated only by the small house at the center of the canvas and the rough path that leads towards it. One tall, slender tree rises from the embankment on the right side. A nascent fascination with light and shadow exists here—the foreground is cast in shade, something that would continue to be characteristic of many of Rouméguère’s paintings, while the light falls around the more distant plane of the house. The clouds, tinged with a slight red-gold glow, show the beginnings of Rouméguère’s expressive skies. However, the work obviously belongs to the artist’s youth.

The shadowing of the foreground, especially, reveals that at this stage Rouméguère still placed more emphasis on local rather than perceived color. Aside from patches of dark grass or brown dirt, the ground color varies relatively little with distance—it is approximately the same green at the lower perimeter of the canvas as at the most distant edge of the shadow and the embankment. The light area, too, shows little variation. This and a somewhat awkward handling of the embankment distort the sense of distance, giving the scene a slightly flattened effect. The brushwork is also more tightly handled than that of Rouméguère’s maturity. This is particularly visible in the tree.

Great care was taken in the curving articulation of the trunk, the delineation of several small branches, and the inclusion of individual leaves—typical of Rouméguère’s early work. By

1905, the artist tended to fuse the foliage into a more unified mass, its expressive capabilities harnessed in support of the mood evoked by the scene as a whole. One of the early works in Madeleine Boyer's collection also illustrates this change—a painting of trees under a pale sky, the smaller branches carefully delineated even in the background (before 1900, figure 38). Also, this early work includes the presence of a stump and a previously-cut trunk from which new branches sprout. Rouméguère's mature works, on the other hand, are completely devoid of fallen, broken, or cut trees or limbs. As his ideas of harmony carried from color into composition, such observed details were edited out—in the mature paintings, despite their illusion of *verité*, everything that might threaten the sensation of unity is suppressed.

Furthermore, these scenes, as the other extant paintings of Rouméguère's early career, depict a slightly hazy, even light that indicates that the artist was interested in creating a sense of luminosity, but had not yet mastered his technique. The sky of the "house in the country" is blue; the clouds mild. The atmosphere in the painting of trees is infused with a pale, fairly uniform golden glow that affects the tops of the background foliage but does not convincingly carry into the foreground. The seeds of Rouméguère's fascination with the effects of atmosphere and the play of light and shadow upon the landscape can be seen in these paintings, but his dramatic sunsets and glowing moons would not appear for some time.

By comparing the *Phases of Light* (1905) to the "house in the country" (1889), the development of Rouméguère's style is immediately clear, as the former present a much more nuanced handling of color and form alike, as well as a newfound subtlety and variety of effect. The eighth of the *Phases*, *Sunset (Coucher de Soleil*, c. 1905, figure 39), contains many of the same elements as the earlier painting. Though an impressive range of snowcapped mountains rising in the distance replaces the unassuming white farmhouse, the paintings share a similar

composition, shadowed foregrounds with the light falling in the background, cliffs with foliage, and winding paths. In *Sunset*, the single delicate tree and scattering of undergrowth perched somewhat awkwardly on an embankment give way to a group of trees expressed as a singular organic mass with tonal variation but no distinct branches or leaves. The embankment itself is more developed, with this and the many-faced mountains demonstrating a much more advanced understanding of plane than in the early work; the ground, trees, and rock are looser, with greater attention to edge and mass and a greater variety of textures. The path also recedes more successfully in *Sunset* than in the early work—it is more defined and effectively placed within the composition according to the rule of thirds, dividing the foreground in an aesthetically-pleasing manner and urging the eye towards the distant mountains.

Overall, this painting shows a more confident handling than the early work. Though the brushwork is still relatively tight compared to some of Rouméguère's other pieces, it is more painterly—by this point, Rouméguère appears to have been conceiving his landscape in shapes of color. His mastery of his palette had also expanded noticeably, with the shadowed foreground alone displaying more variations of green than the entire early picture. This grasp of nuance is especially evident in Rouméguère's handling of the distant peaks against the sky. In order for the mountains to appear appropriately distant and in keeping with the overall atmosphere of the painting, Rouméguère was restricted to a very short tonal range in this area of his painting. Still, he was able to make the mountains stand out from the sky without sacrificing the atmospheric unity of the two. Furthermore, close examination of the mountainside reveals a truly beautiful variety of colors, icy blue juxtaposed with a slightly-muddied, earthy light purple-gray, overlaid with glowing pink snow. In *Sunset*, the rosiness of the gossamer clouds, similar to those of the “house in the country,” is reflected in the mountains and the snow, and the entire scene seems

bathed in an atmosphere of warm evening light. In this painting and the rest of the series, showcasing ten distinct states of light and atmosphere, Roumégère achieved the harmony and diversity of effect that defined his mature work.

Once sure of his method, Roumégère began to explore its limits. One of the key principles expressed in rule seven of his “Réponse du Peintre Roumégère au Critique d’Art Jean de l’Hers” and reiterated in his “Conférence” was the importance of artist’s engagement of his entire palette.¹⁸⁷ This did not mean that the artist should use the complete range of possible tones in every painting, but that he should know his palette fully and be able to compose images utilizing the darkest tonalities, the lightest tonalities, or any range of value and color appropriate to the effect at hand.

For this reason, Roumégère was critical of the tendency to work in a high key that came into vogue with the Impressionists, and his argument for a varied palette relates this to his desire to evoke a somatic response in the viewer: “If we have an emotion, if we tremble in the presence of a work of art, a light painting cannot give *the same nature* of emotion as a dark painting.”¹⁸⁸ Equating the use of a limited palette to chopping off an arm, he concluded, “I don’t want to be an amputee”—and indeed, Roumégère’s mature body of work is incredibly varied.¹⁸⁹ At one end of the spectrum are his hazy pastel scenes (figure 40), in which an extremely high key brings to mind certain canvases by Monet (figure 41). At the other are his moonlit nights (figure 42), where the darkest possible array of tones is alleviated only by the glowing moon, that *astre* of truly surprising radiance.

¹⁸⁷ Roumégère, “Conférence,” 7.

¹⁸⁸ Roumégère, “Conférence,” 7. Original French: Si nous avons une émotion, si nous vibrons en présence d’une œuvre d’art, une peinture claire ne peut pas donner *la même nature* d’émotion qu’une peinture sombre.

¹⁸⁹ Roumégère, “Conférence,” 7. Original French: Je ne veux pas être amputé.

Whereas the *Phases of Light* employs the full range of the palette, its counterpart series, the *States of the Full Moon* (figures 13-16), explores its extremes. This series is also a composite work, consisting of four paintings arranged in a horizontal line within a single custom frame, tracking the full moon from its appearance on the horizon to its sinking in the first hints of pre-dawn light. The paintings display a remarkable degree of luminescence, an effect Rouméguère achieved through his mastery of half-tones, employing his methodology to craft very dark landscapes that retain a sense of depth. When the bright disk of the moon is introduced, the juxtaposition of extreme light and extreme dark, of dullness and intense saturation, create a convincing, almost startling, luminosity. Viewing Rouméguère's *States of the Full Moon* series in a slightly dim room, a convincing sensation of glowing light emanates from these paintings—the combination of Rouméguère's methodology and his somatic treatment of the landscape yield an almost uncanny “*sensation du vrai*.”¹⁹⁰

The abundance of nocturne paintings within Rouméguère's oeuvre also demonstrates his preference for studio work—these were obviously not painted on site. That Rouméguère did paint at least some of his smaller images *sur le motif* is demonstrated by his pocket-box; however, the artist's preferred working method was to observe and sketch. He often spent hours outdoors, then went straight to the studio upon his return.¹⁹¹ While some of his smaller paintings were completed *en plein air*, it does not seem that all were. In at least one case, a miniature landscape labeled for the *Salon des Indépendants* appears to be a more refined copy of an equivalently-sized painting of the same scene (figures 43-44). Whether working small or relatively large, Rouméguère's method allowed him to determine the effect that he wanted to

¹⁹⁰ Though these paintings are not on display, the author was able to view them at the facility in which they are stored. Walking into the room with the lights dimmed, the luminous effect of the moon was especially compelling.

¹⁹¹ As described by Madeleine Boyer and supported by Rouméguère's writings.

convey and recreate it in his studio compositions, meaning that he could convincingly capture even those effects that would be impossible to paint from direct observation.

The way in which effect of light and facture combine to create the illusion of multi-sensory experience is perhaps best demonstrated by two paintings that hang juxtaposed in the permanent display of Rouméguère's work at the *Musée des Jacobins*. Filling the back wall of the room is *The Conflagration* (figure 11), in which a typical farmhouse of the region has gone up in flames in the middle of the night. In this painting, displayed at the 1909 *Salon des Indépendants*, the overall darkness of the scene is strikingly broken by the brilliant, billowing flames that engulf the building and cast an eerie light onto the trees and ground nearby (figure 45). The brushwork is loose and painterly, conveying the texture of the foreground rocks and grasses, the stone of the house and the flickering foliage of a tree at risk of consumption. The strokes with which Rouméguère portrayed the fire are turbulent, furious—laid down in all directions in a way that seems to capture both the motion of the artist's hand and the raging instability of the flames.

Diagonally opposite this painting hangs another. *Snow at Sunset (Neige au Coucher du Soleil*, before 1906, figure 46)—smaller, but still large for Rouméguère at ninety-two by seventy-four centimeters. The scene is a winter day in the Pyrenees, the freshly-fallen snow bathed in a soft evening light. In contrast to *The Conflagration*, this painting conveys absolute silence and stillness, the ground before the viewer unbroken by so much as a bird's track. With the two paintings in such close proximity, the viewer is struck by the sensation of heat and action in the former, of motionless cold in the later. Standing before the winter painting, the sensory effect is as captivating as that of the leaping flames. Rouméguère conveys the experience of being alone in the mountains, feeling the bite of the cold within the absolute calm of this untouched landscape. The way that the setting sun casts soft pinks, purples, and blues over the scene give it

an atmospheric effect less violent than, but every bit as intense as that of the house fire, while Rouméguère's facture is that which Einecke describes as conducive to somatic experience: careful observation reveals thick impasto in some parts of the work, while the white of the canvas shines through in others.¹⁹² That Rouméguère was able to produce two so different canvases capturing two such opposite effects is a testimony to the versatility of his technique, and also to the power of somatic suggestion.

Rouméguère strove to capture not only the extremes of dark and light, heat and cold, but every imaginable condition of atmosphere in between. He tended to favor sunrises and sunsets, perhaps unsurprisingly, as the waxing and waning of the day provide a myriad of available effects (figure 47). Yet he also painted a number of scenes of brilliant midday light (figure 48). The atmospheres Rouméguère evoked range from clear and crisp to hazy and thick with implied humidity; his clouds from light wisps to thick billowing thunderheads (figure 49). Such diversity of effect pervades not only Rouméguère's large canvases, such as *The Conflagration*, but also his almost-impossibly tiny paintings such as the metro ticket series (figure 1) and the *Scales of Morning* (figure 17). In fact, works on an incredibly small scale eventually came to dominate Rouméguère's oeuvre.

Section C: The Significance of Scale

In Rouméguère's paintings, "scale" has two different and equally important connotations. First, as discussed in the section on his writings, is his method of "shrinking the scale" of tones

¹⁹² During my visit in March 2018, the museum staff related the story of another viewer whose experience of this painting was similar to mine—a woman from out of town who, on yearly visits to relatives in Auch, always made a point of stopping by the museum to see this particular painting. Having grown up among the mountains, she insisted that Rouméguère had managed to capture their atmosphere, that this was truly what snow in the mountains was like.

and colors, based on the principle that the eye is more sensitive to proportion than exactitude and will accept as true a series of tones much reduced from the variety found in nature, so long as the relationships between them are preserved.¹⁹³ Second, and more obvious, is the scale of Rouméguère's works themselves, particularly his penchant for miniscule studies.

To work small was not uncommon at the time—especially in the case of outdoor studies.¹⁹⁴ Popularized by the generation of artists associated with the Barbizon school, beginning in the 1830s, such paintings could either serve as preliminary sketches that would be refined into larger, more finished compositions, or they could stand on their own as finished pieces. By this time, the presentation of a small *plein air* oil sketch in an exhibition was no longer shocking or unusual.¹⁹⁵ What was different about Rouméguère's work, however, was both the extreme to which he took this reduction of scale and the importance that he assigned these small pieces within his oeuvre.

Rouméguère categorized his miniature studies as *notes de poche*, or “pocket notes,” which might synonymously be called *pochades*. This term was used to refer to a small “étude which concentrated upon the effect,” or “the study of a complete theme, done from the point of view of correct values and conveying the impression of a motif that has caught the painter's attention.”¹⁹⁶ Rouméguère's work seems to fit within these definitions—although most of his images were incredibly small, even for *pochades*.¹⁹⁷ While the *Académie* did recognize the

¹⁹³ Rouméguère, “Conférence,” 8-10.

¹⁹⁴ Most landscape painters, regardless of style, created *pochades*, or small outdoor paintings—the Louvre has a series of these by Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes; Barbizon artists Charles-François Daubigny and Théodore Rousseau, for example, also created such small sketches, as did the Pointillist Georges Seurat and many others.

¹⁹⁵ Albert Boime, *The Academy and French Painting in the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), 153.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Boime, *Academy*, 150. In my research, I have not come across any other artist of the time who so consistently painted on so small a scale. Most *pochades* seem to be several times larger than the five by ten centimeter format favored by Rouméguère.

validity of *pochades* as finished works in their own right, their typical use was to build the skills necessary to complete larger works.¹⁹⁸ However, the *note de poche* eventually became Rouméguère's standard format. The last series of paintings that he is known to have exhibited, at the 1913 *Salon des Indépendants*, was reminiscent of the *Phases of Light*—ten paintings grouped together in a specially-made frame.¹⁹⁹ But the *Scales of Morning* (figure 17) were positively minuscule, each glowing landscape measuring a mere five by nine centimeters—only slightly larger than the artist's series of paintings on metro cards. While these two series comprised Rouméguère's smallest works, much of his remaining oeuvre was also quite diminutive. Over one hundred of the paintings in the museum's collection measure a mere five by ten centimeters, and many others are only slightly larger.

Why, then, did Rouméguère shrink scenes of mountains and rivers and glowing suns to such a small scale? In his response to the critic de l'Hers, the artist offered a two-part answer: he painted small to ensure that his paintings could be viewed under consistent lighting; however, he also hoped “to make it be forgotten that they are small; the sensation of the Grand will be given all the same by the character.”²⁰⁰ Here, Rouméguère referred to the *Phases of Light*, much larger than his *notes de poche* at twenty-seven by forty centimeters each. That the artist could develop this idea of shrinking the scale to such an extreme is a testimony to his dexterity with the brush: these tiny oil paintings display a dentist's precision and an artist's conceptual fascination with working on incredibly small surfaces.

That a smaller painting is easier to light evenly is evident enough, but Rouméguère's attempt to solve this common problem was at most only partially successful in the *Phases of*

¹⁹⁸ Boime. *Academy*, 150, 153.

¹⁹⁹ Lobstein, *Dictionnaire*, 1497.

²⁰⁰ Rouméguère, “Reponse,” 2.

Light. Though the paintings individually are relatively small, the artist framed them together. As they are displayed at the *Musée des Jacobins*, under artificial lighting, the *Phases* are difficult to photograph or even view as a whole, as certain areas do receive significantly more light than others. No matter what angle the viewer might take, at least part of the series is either washed out by too-direct light or overly shadowed. The diminutive scale of these paintings did not solve the difficulty of lighting because Rouméguère essentially fused the *Phases* back into one sizeable piece. His desire to have the paintings viewed as a series of effects ultimately makes it more difficult to appreciate these effects at all. Perhaps this was, at least partially, Rouméguère's reason for shrinking his paintings even further in the following years. Both the metro tickets and the *Scales of Morning*, framed as series, are still only the size of a small easel painting—thus, these truly are simpler to light evenly.

Rouméguère's second goal—"to make it forgotten that they are small," to capture cliffs and mountains within a few square centimeters—introduces an additional conceptual element to Rouméguère's paintings, and his unusual choice of scale does in fact create an immersive effect.²⁰¹ Whereas a large painting may present a replicated world on or near the viewer's own scale, thereby allowing the sensation that one might walk right into it, large-scale paintings also require the viewer to be at some distance in order to experience the image as a whole. Even a mid-sized easel painting has this effect to some degree. Rouméguère's tiny paintings, on the other hand, pull the viewer in, creating the desire to draw close, to almost touch one's nose to the glass—and even at such proximity, the painting may still be appreciated as a whole, "opening up" as the viewer approaches.

²⁰¹ Rouemguere, "Reponse," 2.

The fourth painting of the *Scales of Morning* series (c. 1913, figure 50), for example, depicts a winding river with a hilly, treed embankment to the right. A bit of the opposing bank and a tree are also included in the left foreground. The sky is almost entirely filled with a mass of glowing clouds whose shape echoes that of the land. Drawing near the painting reveals the delicacy of the rendered effect: the brilliance of the pink glow that catches in the water, the variations of blue and purple in the cloudbank descending along the horizon, the four trees—one highlighted with touches of yellow—whose vertical forms balance the otherwise horizontal composition and lead the eye back into the scene. Roumégère's harmony is indeed realized here, in miniature.

While some of the texture and brushwork that add to the somatic effect in Roumégère's larger paintings are lost in these tiny images, I would posit that the reduction in size itself serves a somatic function that compensates for the less-varied paint strokes.²⁰² It is only the viewer's physical response of moving close to the scene that allows him or her to engage with, to "enter," the scene as a whole. This close-up viewing also relates to the idea of somatic techniques as evoking an intimate, personal experience.

Here again, there is some conflict between two of Roumégère's guiding principles. His insistence on displaying his paintings as series does indeed allow the viewer to compare and appreciate the subtle and varied effects the painter achieved and his ability to conjure up many diverse atmospheric conditions and states of light. However, the display of multiple images together somewhat reduces the immersive effect previously described. The viewer may engage with each individual painting if he or she so chooses, but the scene is always part of a larger context, which disturbs the sensation that each tiny painting is a world unto itself and prevents

²⁰² Claudia Einecke describes a similar phenomenon in "Beyond Seeing," 270.

the viewer from entering fully into the illusion. Nonetheless, the typical relationship between viewer and painting is altered through Rouméguère's diminished scale, as he challenges the viewer to find the "Grand" within the miniscule.

The sensory, affective, and atmospheric-yet-methodical character of these tiny paintings is representative of the best of Rouméguère's mature oeuvre, and it is also in these small works, perhaps, that Rouméguère's paintings are most modern. While this modernity is explicit in the metro ticket series, due to Rouméguère's choice of support, even his paintings on small panels have a conceptual element that is different from his more traditionally-sized paintings. In these arrangements that evoke a sense of place and personal experience within the southern landscape, colors carefully selected so that no note disturbs their harmony, one understands why one critic referred to Rouméguère's studies as lines of verse. E. Ponvosin, in his interview with the artist and synopsis of his studio, "*Dans les Ateliers: Chez J. -L. Rouméguère*" described Rouméguère as "such a poet who has composed twenty thousand Alexandrines to train his hand, to control the rhyme and the words, in order to dismiss, later, every technical difficulty, to succeed in hiding the *method*, to veil the *formula*."²⁰³

In this critique, Ponvosin gave a synopsis of what Rouméguère sought to accomplish by means of the method he had developed. The element of poetry within his work comes from the distillation of observed reality into carefully composed harmonies of color, an incredible variety of effects encapsulated within series upon series of tiny paintings that were, for Rouméguère, an attempt to capture nature in all its varied pathos, a conclusion reinforced by the artist's own

²⁰³ Ponvosin, "Ateliers." Original French: [. . .] tel un poète qui a composé vingt mille alexandrins pour se faire la main, pour asservir la rime et les mots, de manière à écarter plus tard toute difficulté technique, a réussi à cacher le *métier*, à voiler la *formule*.

description of his objectives. Rouméguère's little paintings, then, might indeed be likened to poetry—in the manner of the sonnet rather than the ballad.

The atmospheric, somatic, poetic qualities of Rouméguère's art are what elevated his myriad *notes de poche* above mere color studies and gained him interest and praise among his contemporaries—although his career was short and success fleeting, Ponvosin and Achard were not the only critics to sing the provincial painter's praise. Additional critical reviews and the perception of Rouméguère's work among his contemporaries will be discussed in more detail in the following chapter.

CHAPTER V: Contextualizing Rouméguère's Art

Section A: Contemporary Critical Responses

What Rouméguère's own writings, and even his paintings, do not reveal is how his work was perceived at the time in which he lived and exhibited. Building that context requires outside sources, and the numerous exhibition reviews published during the painter's career have proved valuable in reconstructing both a timeline of Rouméguère's exhibitions and the contemporary dialogue surrounding his work. Patterns begin to emerge as one examines which critics found Rouméguère's work worth writing about, whether their opinions were positive or negative, and what specific language and ideas were repeated from critique to critique. An examination of a selection of exhibition reviews published from 1905 through 1913, along with additional documents from Rouméguère's time in Paris, illuminate the reception that the artist's work received during his lifetime and underscore the stylistic diversity of this period.

A June 18, 1905 article entitled "Beaux-Arts" in the *République des Travailleurs* marked the beginning of Rouméguère's public career, reprinting a lengthy list of laudatory reviews garnered by the artist with his successful exhibition of his *Phases of Light*. "Our pleasant compatriot," as the anonymous writer dubbed Rouméguère, was well-represented in the local press and even beyond.²⁰⁴ *La Petite Revue Méridionale*, of Toulouse, for example, praised Rouméguère as "the painter of skies of which no nuance however subtle, however fleeting, escapes him," echoing the earlier praise of Albert Kaempfen, *Directeur des Musées Nationaux*.²⁰⁵ The article continues: "And he renders his impressions with a joy, with a dexterity so subtle, an awareness so great, that his palette, for once obedient, doesn't dare to keep its

²⁰⁴ "Beaux Arts," *République des Travailleurs*, June 18, 1905 Original French: Notre sympathique compatriote

²⁰⁵ Rouméguère, "Notes Biographiques," 17.

secrets from him.”²⁰⁶ Meanwhile, another local publication, the less-effusive *L’Express du Midi*, noted that Rouméguère’s paintings were “not without observation and ability, a useful example for his students of the principle effects *en plein air*.”²⁰⁷ The artist’s considerable observational skills, which continued to be applauded in the following years, were also mentioned in *La Dépêche du Midi*: “These little paintings [the *Phases of Light*], each of which has demanded patient observations, are very adroitly treated and denote in the artist not only patience, but also a great acuity of vision.”²⁰⁸

The same article also cites two Parisian publications, evidence that Rouméguère was noticed in the capital from this very first exhibition, if not before.²⁰⁹ Interestingly, these articles are both more abundant in their praise and lengthier than those of the more local publications.

Rouméguère received this review from the *Revue des Lettres*:

J.-L. Rouméguère reveals himself this year at Toulouse and conquers in one stroke sympathy, respect, and admiration! Patient, a conscientious seeker, he has managed surprising effects of light. He never ceases to study, erases himself entirely behind his work and treats painting like a science or, better, as a musical composition.²¹⁰

²⁰⁶ “Beaux Arts.” Original French: le peintre des ciels dont aucune nuance si atténuée, si fugace soit-elle, ne lui échappe. Et il rend ses impressions avec un bonheur, un doigte si subtil, une conscience si grande, que sa palette, pour une fois bonne fille, n’ose pas conserver pour lui des secrets. . . .

²⁰⁷ “Beaux Arts.” Though a vague mention of students is made here and in *La Revue Illustrée*, I have found no other evidence that Rouméguère ever taught, nor that he shared his techniques with anyone but Georges Lemoyne preceding the publication of his “Conférence.” Original French: non sans observation et habilité, un exemple utile pour ses élèves des principaux effets en plein air.

²⁰⁸ “Beaux Arts.” Original French: Ces petits tableaux, dont chacun a demandé de patientes observations, sont très habilement traités et dénotent chez l’artiste non seulement de la patience, mais encore une grande acuité de vision. . . .

²⁰⁹ Based on Rouméguère’s previously-mentioned dialogue with Kaempfen and Gailhard’s offer for the *Phases of Light* in 1905, it seems likely that Rouméguère had begun forming his circle of acquaintances and admirers during his formation in Paris.

²¹⁰ “Beaux Arts.” Original French: J.-L. Rouméguère se révèle cette année à Toulouse et conquiert d’un trait la sympathie, le respect, l’admiration ! Patient, chercheur consciencieux, il est arrivé à des effets de lumière surprenants. Il ne cesse d’étudier, s’efface entièrement derrière son œuvre et traite la peinture comme une science ou mieux comme une composition musicale.

Here was the first time that Roumégère was referred to in print as a “seeker,” an epithet that would continue to follow him, used to describe his way of working and his quest to understand the tenets of color, harmony, and light. This was also the first published mention of the relationship between Roumégère’s paintings and music—a link that, as discussed, the artist later made explicit and extensively expounded upon within his own writings.

A second Parisian publication mentioned in the same article, *L’Oeuvre Internationale*, provides what was the most extensive—and perhaps most colorful—analysis of Roumégère’s work to that date. The article reads in part:

J. -L. Roumégère paints as he feels, and his sensibility is so sharp that by it he has succeeded in mastering the enchanting and fleeting aspects of nature, of the sky in particular, at all hours. [. . .]
In effect, to attempt the formidable work of exactly recreating his impression, he needs more than the unfaithful memory of the eye; he needs to forge new and yet unknown laws of the harmony of tones, the science of painting, even more: scientific painting. This is why for more than twenty years, working without rest to dethrone the old dogmas, the old formulas, the gods themselves, he innovates an esthetic or rather a science of the harmony of colors resembling that, more mathematic, but not more certain, of perspective [. . .]”²¹¹

This review is notable for reasons beyond its length: here, the critic seemed to recognize the way in which Roumégère’s work blended quasi-scientific technique with a sensory, affective handling of paint. The artist “paints as he feels,” yet he also “forge[s] new and yet unknown laws of the harmony of tones, the science of painting, even more: scientific painting.” Furthermore, this review clearly demonstrates that Roumégère’s color research was perceived

²¹¹ “Beaux Arts.” Original French: J.-L. Roumégère peint comme il sent, et sa sensibilité est si aigue qu’il a réussi par elle a maitriser les aspects féériques et fugaces de la nature, du ciel en particulier, a toutes les heures. [. . .] En effet, pour essayer le travail formidable de recréer exactement son impression il lui faudra qu’il forge des lois nouvelles et ignorées encore de l’harmonie des tons, la science de la peinture, bien plus : la peinture scientifique. C’est pourquoi depuis plus de vingt ans, travaillant sans relâche a détrôner les vieux dogmes, les vieilles formules, les dieux eux-mêmes, il innove une esthétique ou mieux une science de l’harmonie des couleurs semblable a celle, plus mathématique, mais non moins certaine, de la perspective [. . .]

by at least some critics as something new, similar to the science of perspective but in need of further exploration and codification. The critic also described Rouméguère in surprisingly avant-garde terms—“working without rest to dethrone the old dogmas, the old formulas, the gods themselves.” Though few others would go quite this far in their evaluations, *L’Oeuvre International* was not the only publication to praise the emerging artist’s innovation and ingenuity.

Also indicative of Rouméguère’s budding reputation were the numerous offers and inquiries that the *Phases of Light* received, as recorded in correspondence between the artist and the Salon committee.²¹² Those interested included an anonymous Englishman and, most notably, the director of the Opera in Paris, Pedro Gailhard (1848-1918), who offered the artist 27,000 francs for his painting. Rouméguère refused, insisting that he could not part with his masterwork for less than 30,000, and the piece remained in his studio at the time of his death.²¹³

Whether Rouméguère had already encountered Gailhard before this exhibition—during his studies in Paris, for instance—is not known, but the director’s offer to purchase Rouméguère’s painting is further evidence of the network of friends, acquaintances, and potential acquaintances that the artist had begun to establish in Paris even before relocating to the city. Despite his penchant for independence and declarations of autonomy, Rouméguère was not without connections, including some significant contemporary figures.

Gailhard, who directed the Opera from 1884-1891 and 1893-1907, retiring briefly to pursue his passion for sculpting before becoming director of the New York Conservatory, had

²¹² L. Michaud, Union Artistique de Toulouse, Musée des Jacobins (April 22, 1905).

²¹³ Brel-Bordaz, “La Donation Rouméguère,” 78.

quite a bit in common with Rouméguère.²¹⁴ Gailhard was a native of Toulouse. Both men sang baritone; both dabbled in a variety of professional and artistic endeavors.²¹⁵ Gailhard apparently remained in contact with Rouméguère after offering to buy his painting, and the acquaintance proved to be important to the artist. According to the 1906 letter that Rouméguère wrote to Marcel, Gailhard was one of the first to whom the artist showed his work upon his arrival in Paris, and, impressed, the director was among those who attempted to help the artist find a suitable space for his solo exhibition.²¹⁶

Next to his published writings and Marcel's recollections, Rouméguère's lengthy letter to his son offers perhaps the most insight into the artist's life and experiences. More than that, it reveals the struggles of an independent, unaffiliated artist attempting to navigate the Parisian art scene—and the connections that led to his solo show. Rouméguère's account includes his frustration in attempting to meet with Etienne Dujardin-Beaumetz (1852-1913), the undersecretary of the Ecole de Beaux-Arts, who was known to take an interest in independents.²¹⁷ Apparently Rouméguère did eventually procure a successful audience, because when the exhibition that he had envisioned opened two months later at the *Cercle de la Librairie*, 117 boulevard Saint-Germain, Dujardin-Beaumetz was officiating.²¹⁸

²¹⁴"Pedro Gailhard (1848-1918)," Bibliothèque Nationale de France. http://data.bnf.fr/14844023/pedro_gailhard/biography and "Gailhard to Resume Chisel: Veteran Retiring Director of Paris Opera to be a Sculptor Again," *New York Times*, Dec. 20, 1907. <https://www.nytimes.com/1907/12/20/archives/gailhard-to-resume-chisel-veteran-retiring-director-of-paris-opera.html>.

²¹⁵"Gailhard," BnF, and Rouméguère, "Notes Biographiques," 3.

²¹⁶ Rouméguère, Letter to his son, 6.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ "Nos Artistes à Paris," *La République des Travailleurs*, September 28, 1906.

The show was a critical—though not financial—success, featured in a number of newspapers.²¹⁹ In the *Cercle*'s own paper, *La Librairie*, a June 15, 1906 critique describes Rouméguière as “a great painter of nature, yesterday completely unknown.”²²⁰ The article continues:

He has applied himself to translate the diverse aspects of nature's beauty and the marvelous effects of the sun's splendor and of the magic reflections of the moon. [...] He]knows how to interpret with such an impressive veracity, a vigor of tone and a clarity that impose admiration, the clear visions that he has of the moon, and the life that it produces; it is because the passion for nature and the will that that passion has nurtured in him have made him triumph over all the aridness and material difficulties of his task. He developed in isolation, without other guide or assistance than his own good judgment, by the sureness of his glance and the knowing employment that he has made of his palette, to paint the magnificent works of art that class him from now on among our most justly and highly reputed master landscapists. [...] He doesn't confine himself to a system or a preferred procedure; he knows how to render all the aspects, all the sensations, all the qualities of light, all the harmonies.²²¹

This approbative analysis of Rouméguière's work maintained the tone set in 1905: Rouméguière was an artist of talent, an independent, and particularly committed to harmony,

²¹⁹ Rouméguière, “Notes Biographiques,” 7. Despite the critical acclaim that he achieved, Rouméguière's work, likely overpriced, did not sell well. That he did sell some, however, is well-recorded in the artist's own logs and correspondence within the *Musée des Jacobins*' collection.

²²⁰ “J. -L. Rouméguière: Une Révélation Artistique,” *La Librairie*, June 15, 1906. Original French: [...] un grand peintre de la nature, hier encore complètement ignore de tout le monde [...].

²²¹ Ibid. Original French: Il s'est appliqué à traduire les aspects si divers des beautés de la nature et les merveilleux effets du resplendissement du soleil et des reflets magiques de la lune. [...] qui sait interpréter avec une si impressionnante vérité, une vigueur de tons et une clarté qui imposent l'admiration, les nettes visions qu'il a de la lumière, et de la vie qu'elle produit, c'est que la passion de la nature et la volonté que cette passion a soutenue en lui, lui ont fait triompher de toutes les aridités et difficultés matérielles de sa tâche. Il est parvenu isolement, sans autre guide ni secours que son propre jugement, par la sureté de son coup-d'œil et l'emploi savant qu'il a fait de sa palette, à peindre des œuvres d'art magnifiques qui le classent des maintenant parmi nos maitres paysagistes les plus justement et hautement réputés. [...] il ne se confine pas en un système ou un procède préféré, il sait rendre tous les aspects, toutes les sensations, tous les éclairages, toutes les harmonies.

light, and *vérité*. The article concludes by quoting the words of Georges Lemoyne, the critic and friend who wrote the prologue of the catalogue for Roumégère's exhibition:²²²

He is the cantor of the earth in all its aspects: he is the lover of Nature . . . and before the canvases of Roumégère we are convinced that the scientific method by which he inspires himself comes to bring an unknown test to art, to pierce for her a new path, and to enlarge indefinitely her domain.²²³

Lemoyne's glowing description of the artist's work was also quoted in several other contemporary critiques. The critic was undoubtedly one of Roumégère's closest friends—the artist stated in his "Conférence" that Lemoyne's urging was the catalyst that prompted Roumégère's Parisian venture.²²⁴

A few months after the show, news of Roumégère's success reached the south: *La République des Travailleurs*, a Toulouse publication, ran a September 28, 1906 article entitled "Nos Artistes à Paris," which listed thirty titles that had announced or critiqued Roumégère's exhibition, including excerpts of some of these.²²⁵ As the artist's only documented solo show and undoubtedly the most extensive display of his work during his lifetime, Roumégère's 1906 exhibition inspired many of the most insightful and protracted evaluations of the artist's work that were published at any point in his career.

The local paper *Notre Midi* printed a review entitled "Un Paysagiste Méridional: J.-L. Roumégère" on the first of April, 1906—the same article that called Roumégère an artist of and for the southwest.²²⁶ Signed G. L., the review was likely penned by Georges Lemoyne. It

²²² I have not been able to find any biographical information on Georges Lemoyne, other than that he was a writer.

²²³ "J.-L. Roumégère: Une Révélation Artistique." Original French: Ce n'est pas le peintre des brumes, ni le peintre des saisons, des bois ou des montagnes. C'est le chantre de la terre sous tous ses aspects ; c'est l'amant de la Nature. . . . Et devant les toiles de Roumégère, nous sommes convaincus que la méthode scientifique, dont il s'inspire vient apporter un concours inconnu à l'art, lui percer une voie nouvelle, et lui élargir infiniment son domaine.

²²⁴ Roumégère, "Conférence," 13.

²²⁵ "Nos Artistes," *La République*.

²²⁶ G. L., "Paysagiste."

noted Roumégère's recent arrival in Paris and his success the previous year in Toulouse, where "the public made him a triumph not at all because of his method, which, until today, he has kept hidden, but because of the simple aesthetic and the harmonious truth of his canvases."²²⁷

Lemoyne admired the "limpid caresses of healthy and joyful nature, the illuminations that his enlightened taste ably knows how to kindle within his paintings," and the "emotive, chanting beauty" of Roumégère's work, stating, "He is the lover of the light, ingrate and capricious mistress that gives herself to right few."²²⁸ This review uses vividly multi-sensory—indeed, sensual—language in describing Roumégère's work, emphasizing its somatic quality and the artist's southern identity.

Critic Edouard Achard's aforementioned review in the June 24, 1906 *Journal des Cubistes*—"the Midi. . . sings under his brush"—was actually one of few to offer a slightly negative critique. Achard was not enthusiastic about Roumégère's "Conférence," stating that he found the booklet "arid" upon skimming it.²²⁹ Despite his misgivings, however, Achard attended the exhibition, where he found himself unexpectedly spellbound before Roumégère's work.²³⁰ Achard also noted that Roumégère composed two palettes, one dark and one light, for his paintings. The shadowed areas were not merely darkened versions of the light; they were their own separate entities, rendered in the tones in which Roumégère saw them—confirming the artist's description of composing multiple "tonalities" within his paintings.²³¹ The "frank and simple touches" that captured "all the fleeting transformations of light," won the critic's

²²⁷ Ibid. Original French: [. . .] le public lui fit un triomphe, non point à cause de sa méthode, que, jusqu'aujourd'hui, il a tenu cachée, mais pour l'esthétique simple et la vérité harmonieuse de ses toiles.

²²⁸ Ibid. Original French: [. . .] les limpides caresses de la nature saine et joyeuse, les illuminations que son goût éclairé sut habilement allumer sur ses tableaux [. . .]. Il est l'amante de la lumière, ingrate et capricieuse maîtresse qui s'est livrée à bien peu.

²²⁹ Achard, "Peinture." Roumégère admitted that he was not always the clearest writer ("Réponse", 4), but most other mentions of his conference presentation were nonetheless positive.

²³⁰ Achard, "Peinture."

²³¹ Achard, "Peinture."

admiration; Rouméguère, Achard stated, was “sincere”—a word often used to describe the artist and his work.²³² Rouméguère himself made the remark, in a later letter, that he was “always sincere—this is a desirable quality in artist and critics alike.”²³³

Rouméguère’s sincerity was also noted by Georges Lemoyne, whose words were quoted by artist Louis Icart (1880-1950) in his review of “Une Exposition Originale” in the *Journal du Caire*: “In our époque where life seems to strip itself each day of a bit of its mystery, the works of such an artist respond better than all the others, by their sincerity, to our modern intellectuality.”²³⁴ Icart, like Rouméguère, was originally from the southwest, having been born in Toulouse. He was also an artist, but not a landscape painter. Rather, Icart was known for his drawings of women, sometimes glamorous, sometimes erotic, often bordering on caricature. Icart, who admitted that he had come to the exhibition with low expectations and, like Achard, had been quite pleasantly surprised, felt that Rouméguère was no “ordinary” landscapist, that “in these paintings vibrated nature herself.”²³⁵ He described the qualities of Rouméguère’s work that yielded the effect of sincerity: namely, a certain fidelity to nature and the ability to capture light “so just and so true” that one might almost pinpoint the very hour depicted.²³⁶

The once-skeptical Icart may have been Rouméguère’s connection to author Paul Yaki (1883-1964), who later founded the *Musée de Vieux Montmartre*. Icart had done some illustrations for Yaki, who was primarily an author, penning such works as *Le Montmartre de Nos Vingt Ans* (1933) and *Montmartre: Terre des Artistes* (1947). Though Yaki does not seem to

²³² Ibid. Original French: [. . .] touches franches et simples [. . .] toutes les transformations fugaces de la lumière [. . .].

²³³ Jean-Louis Rouméguère, Letter dated June 9, 1909, address illegible, *Rouméguère* collection, Musée des Jacobins.

²³⁴ Louis Icart, “Une Exposition Originale,” *Journal du Caire*, June 26, 1906. Original French: A notre époque où la vie semble dépouiller chaque jour un peu de son mystère, les travaux d’un tel artiste répondant mieux que tous les autres, par leur sincérité, à notre intellectuel moderne.

²³⁵ Icart, “Exposition.” Original French: [. . .] sur ces tableaux vibrait la nature elle-même.

²³⁶ Ibid. Original French: [. . .] si justes et si vrais [. . .].

have written any reviews for Rouméguière, he did write a letter on the artist's behalf, petitioning the State to purchase Rouméguière's artwork. Though no purchase was ever made, Rouméguière's dossier also includes a letter of support from Gustave Geffroy. Geffroy, who also named the artist in several reviews of the *Salon des Indépendants* published annually in *La Dépêche*, listing Rouméguière among those he considered the best landscapists.²³⁷ Geffroy's letter reads:

Permit me to recommend to you for purchase by the State, one of the submissions of Mr. Rouméguière to the Salon des Indépendants: *Effect of Snow in the Morning*, or *Stormy Weather*, or *Hill at Sunset*. Mr. Rouméguière merits your attention and your benevolence, and I would be glad if you could give him your precious encouragement.²³⁸

Yaki's less-formal letter also cites "encouragement" for a deserving artist as the main reason for a purchase, urging the State to consider this painter who had "come late to Paris."²³⁹

The support of Icart, Yaki, and Geffroy, along with some of the more conservative critics, demonstrates the interest generated by Rouméguière's paintings within a diverse and sometimes surprising group of people. A lifelong appreciator of Rouméguière's work, Geffroy once told Marcel that the elder Rouméguière was a "very great artist" and "noble character."²⁴⁰ Following the artist's death in 1925, Geffroy sent a handwritten note of condolence to Rouméguière's widow and son, testifying to his admiration of Rouméguière's character and

²³⁷ Gustave Geffroy, "Causeries: Le Salon des Indépendants," *La Dépêche*, March 29, 1910, and Gustave Geffroy, "Causeries: Le Salon des Indépendants," *La Dépêche*, April 1909.

²³⁸ Gustave Geffroy, Letter to the Undersecretary of Beaux-Arts, June 7?, 1911, Archives Nationales de France. Original French: Permettez-moi de vous recommander pour un achat pour l'Etat, l'un des envois de M. Rouméguière au Salon des Indépendants : *Effet de neige au matin*, ou *Temps orageux*, ou *Colline au coucher du soleil*. M. Rouméguière mérite votre attention et votre bienveillance, et je serai heureux si vous pourriez lui donner votre précieux encouragement.

²³⁹ Paul Yaki, Letter to the Undersecretary of Beaux-Arts, undated, Archives Nationales de France.

²⁴⁰ Rouméguière, "Notes Biographiques," 8.

talent.²⁴¹ One can only speculate that, had Rouméguère come earlier to Paris, connections such as Geffroy, Dujardin-Beaumetz, and Gailhard might have ensured him a more successful career.

Another article, “Exhibition J. -L. Rouméguère—Une Nouvelle Méthode: La Peinture Scientifique,” published in the *Revue Illustrée* in July of 1906, offered much the same opinion as that expressed by Icart, Achard, and Lemoyne. In Rouméguère’s work, the writer saw “a sincerity pushed to fanaticism” and marveled at the artist’s ability to retain a sense of spontaneity and pathos while employing his methodical, mathematical technique.²⁴² The author praised Rouméguère’s work as “personal and unique” and “picturesque,” appreciating the artist’s skill in depicting the nuances of nature in his art and writing of his theories: “We congratulate Mr. Rouméguère on having made the Sphinx speak, having robbed it of a bit of its mystery.”²⁴³

Here, Rouméguère’s method was again recognized as something novel. Though most critics were not quite so effusive in their endorsement, Rouméguère’s system for manipulating color to achieve harmonious yet naturalistic effects seems to have been perceived as a development with the potential to advance and establish a new precision and order in that aspect of painting that had largely been considered the realm of “genius” rather than instruction.²⁴⁴

After the expense and difficulty of his first exhibition, having been rejected by the *Salon des Artistes Françaises* and *Salon d’Automne*, Rouméguère began to exhibit yearly at the *Salon des Independents* in 1908.²⁴⁵ Here, his paintings were discovered and re-discovered over the next

²⁴¹ Gustave Geffroy, Letter to Madame Veuve J. L. Rouméguère and her son, December 30, 1925, Musée des Jacobins.

²⁴² “Exposition J.-L. Rouméguère—Une Nouvelle Méthode: La Peinture Scientifique,” *La Revue Illustrée*, July 15, 1906. Original French: Une sincérité poussée jusqu’au fanatisme [. .].

²⁴³ “Exposition,” *Revue*. Original French: Félicitons M. Rouméguère d’avoir fait parler le Sphinx, de lui avoir arraché un peu de son mystère.

²⁴⁴ Boime, *Academy*, 86.

²⁴⁵ Rouméguère, “Notes Biographiques,” 7.

six years and exclaimed over by a variety of critics, some of whom expressed the hope that Roumégère would seek out opportunities to show in more prestigious venues.²⁴⁶

Today, analysis of the *Salon des Indépendants* tends to focus on the presence of the avant-garde. The early twentieth century was a time of tremendous innovation and stylistic change for the arts. As Roumégère was working out his methodology, Matisse was painting *Le Bonheur de Vivre* (1906), Jean Metzinger (1883-1956) was perfecting his Divisionist style, and Picasso was developing Cubism with *Les Femmes d'Alger* (1907). That the nascent work of the Cubists and Fauves, among others, was shown alongside the paintings of seasoned Post-Impressionists like Paul Signac (1863-1935) is a testimony to the show's fidelity to its mission of offering any artist the chance to display his or her work, and the exhibition claims the honor of having shown many of Paris's modern masters. That Roumégère's artwork also found its place here for six years in a row, his delicate, often-tiny landscapes with their precisely-mixed colors drawing the attention and approbation of critics, underscores the diversity of this exhibition. The presence of artists like Roumégère demonstrates that the *Salon des Indépendants* was vital not only to the radical experimenters of the day, but also to unassociated provincial artists attempting to build Parisian careers without—in Roumégère's case and likely others—the support structure of the Academy or a cohesive circle of like-minded artists.

Shortly before the 1908 *Salon des Indépendants*, Roumégère's name reappeared in the Parisian press in “*Dans les Ateliers: Chez J. -L. Roumégère*,” by E. Ponvosin—the article in which Ponvosin referred to Roumégère's paintings as “Alexandrines.” Ponvosin, who later sent Roumégère a clipping of a different article with a hand-written note “to the good painter

²⁴⁶ Ponvosin, “Ateliers.”

Rouméguère,” invited Parisians to come to the studio to see the paintings of “nights that are never dark” and “snows that are never white.”²⁴⁷

Rouméguère’s identity as a painter whose ostensibly “scientific” technique served to capture the subjective poetry and emotion of nature is underscored by the only one of the six paintings that he included in the 1908 *Salon des Indépendants* that can be identified with any certainty: *Blazing Atmosphere in Winter* (*Embrasement de l’Atmosphère en Hiver*, c. 1908, figure 51).²⁴⁸ *Blazing Atmosphere in Winter* is most likely the piece by the same name that appears in the list of works for Rouméguère’s 1906 *Cercle de la Librairie* show. The painting is a glowing winter scene, the fiery sun hanging low over the horizon and bathing mountain, tree, and snow alike in a brilliant pink glow. It is an ecstatic, exultant scene, and Rouméguère’s commitment to veracity seems pushed to the brink in this jubilant ode to what must be one of winter’s most dazzling effects.

Rouméguère’s 1908 entries, including this, were characterized as “offer[ing] us a series of six canvases where the luminous tonalities are true” in an April 23, 1908, article in *L’Echo du 9ème Arrondissement*.²⁴⁹ The reviewer continued: “His prestigious brush affirms itself with a rare mastery in *Sunlight in the Undergrowth*, *Moonrise*, *Blazing Atmosphere in Winter*, and several other canvases that fix our attention.”²⁵⁰ As in 1905 and 1906, the reviewers generally showered the artist from the *Midi* with ample praise, and again, Rouméguère’s work was characterized by its vivacity, its luminosity, and its “truth” to nature.

²⁴⁷ Ponvosin, “Ateliers.” Original French: [. . .] avec des nuits qui ne furent jamais sombres, avec des neiges qui ne furent jamais blanches !

²⁴⁸ *Catalogue de la 24ème Exposition* (Paris: Société des Artistes Indépendants, 1908), 344-345.

²⁴⁹ “Salon,” *L’Echo*. Original French: [. . .] qui nous offre une série de six toiles où les tonalités lumineuses sont vécues.

²⁵⁰ “Salon,” *L’Echo*. Original French: Sa brosse prestigieuse s’affirme avec une maestria rare dans *un soleil sous bois*, *un lever de lune*, *un embrasement de l’atmosphère en hiver*, et quelques autres toiles qui fixent l’attention.

Rouméguère continued to show at the *Salon des Indépendants* over the next several years, but his brief Parisian career came to an end about 1913, the last year in which his work was included in the *Indépendants*. There is no evidence to suggest that he ever exhibited elsewhere during this time, except in private galleries, despite calls for him to do so.²⁵¹ In 1909, Rouméguère entered two paintings in the *Salon des Indépendants*, *The Conflagration* (figure 11) and *Evening Sunlight in the High-Pyrenees (Soleil du Soir dans les Hautes-Pyrénées)*; in 1910, his five entries included two entitled *Moonrise (Lever de lune)*, *Morning Haze (Brume du matin)*, *A Gave (Evening Effect) (Un gave (effet du soir))*, *Sunset (Coucher du soleil)*, and *Effect of the Setting Sun (Effet du soleil couchant)*.²⁵² Consistent with the tendency of his larger oeuvre, the scale of Rouméguère's submissions decreased through the years. His 1911 entry included a series of *notes de poche* depicting a wide variety of effects, while his final exhibition, in 1913, was of the tiny *Scales of Morning* (figure 17).²⁵³

Press concerning Rouméguère's entries in the *Salons des Indépendants* usually took one of two forms: a brief mention in a larger review of the exhibition as a whole or a lengthier article devoted to Rouméguère's work alone. Notably, Rouméguère's name appears in several articles also praising Signac, the renowned Pointillist.²⁵⁴ That Rouméguère should be listed alongside Signac shows both the high esteem in which the lesser-known artist was held and the range of work applauded by the critics of the time—while the Fauves and Cubists still seemed scandalous to many, most of the exhibition reviews pertaining to Rouméguère seem to also indicate a general appreciation for both the aesthetic and scientific value of art like Signac's. The artists'

²⁵¹ "J. -L. Rouméguère," *La Capitale*, May 1909.

²⁵² *Catalogue de la 25eme Exposition* (Paris: Société des Artistes Indépendants, 1909), 158, and *Catalogue de la 26eme Exposition* (Paris: Société des Artistes Indépendants, 1910), 292.

²⁵³ *Catalogue de la 29eme Exposition* (Paris: Société des Artistes Indépendants, 1913), 252.

²⁵⁴ Eugene Tardieu, "Le Salon des Indépendants," *L'Echo de Paris*, April 21, 1911, and Gustave Geffroy, "Causeries: Le Salon des Indépendants," *La Dépêche*, March 29, 1910.

very different styles belied a surprising degree of shared principle—both sought to capture effects of light and to better understand color, though their methods could not have been more opposed.

Among later reviews of the Salon des Indépendants, a 1910 article in *La Croix* classes Roumégère as one of the “formidable and proud artists” who pointedly avoid the more formal, jury-based salons, describing him as “an austere landscapist, of a great sincerity, whose six beautiful canvases sing of nature with an extraordinary consciousness.”²⁵⁵ In 1911, a review of the Salon des Indépendants by “Les Quatre” in *L’Autorité* begins with a rebuke of the overall strangeness and mediocracy of the exhibition before transitioning to an examination of a few select individuals whom the authors thought worthy of praise—first among whom was again Roumégère:

Amidst all this manure, we have been agreeably surprised to discover a pearl, which is the work of Mr. Roumégère. It emanates from a great, a very great artist. His *Notes d’une boîte de poche* constitute as much as small masterworks. A tranquil charm, a suave poetry emerges from them, but they are at the same time the work of a marvelous colorist. Mr. Roumégère possesses the sense of art, in all the fullness of the term. His design is of an admirable vigor, the tones marvelously appropriate. He is Gascon and that is felt. He loves the light and has the great talent to know and reproduce its fantasies and its deceptive games.²⁵⁶

Among the broader exhibition reviews, Eugene Hoffman mentioned Roumégère’s two entries to the 1909 Salon in the *Journal des Artistes*, focusing especially on *The Conflagration*.

²⁵⁵ “Les Indépendants,” *La Croix*, March 27, 1910. Original French: [. . .] un paysagiste austère, d’une grande sincérité, dont les six belles toiles chantent la nature avec une conscience extraordinaire.

²⁵⁶ Les Quatre, “Le Salon des Indépendants,” *L’Autorité*, April 22, 1911. Original French: Parmi tout ce fumier, nous avons été agréablement surpris de découvrir une perle, c’est l’œuvre de M. Roumégère. Elle émane d’un grande, d’un très grand artiste. Ses *Notes d’une boîte de poche* constituent autant de petits chefs-d’œuvre. Un charme tranquille, une suave poésie s’en dégage ; mais elles sont en même temps le fait d’un merveilleux coloriste. M. Roumégère possède le sens de l’art, dans toute acceptation du terme. Son dessin est d’une admirable vigueur, les tons merveilleusement appropriés. Il est Gascon et cela se sent. Il aime la lumière et a le grand talent de savoir en reproduire les fantaisies et les jeux décevants.

Hoffman described the image as the artist's "capital entry," displaying "a very curious effect of lighting, very conscientiously followed" that "puts the science of the painter on center stage."²⁵⁷

Hoffman was not the only critic of the day to take an interest in *The Conflagration*, and it was mentioned in several other reviews. Another article in the same paper, this one by Georges Battanchon (1879-1914), gave a detailed description of this painting that presented such a "striking effect that [it] could not be passed unnoticed," concluding that "the composition, of a naturalism and simplicity full of grandeur, is however very adroitly composed to obtain the maximum effect."²⁵⁸

Such critiques reveal the extent to which the now-obscure artist's work was once known, as well as the diverse network of friends and acquaintances with whom Rouméguère was associated and who helped him in his attempt to build a career in Paris. Additionally, they also provide a vocabulary for discussing the artist's work that aids in placing him thematically and stylistically with the larger contemporary context. Recurrent words and concepts in these critiques denote the essential qualities of Rouméguère's paintings: simplicity, truth to nature, the ability to adroitly capture a myriad of luminous effects, a sense of harmony and poetry, and an emotive and somatic quality that belied his methodical technique. A number of reviewers cited the artist's sincerity, honesty, and craftsmanship, as well as his ability to "translate" or "interpret" the landscape, to make it accessible to the audience.²⁵⁹ Such language evokes the artist's own stated commitment to veracity and establishes the perceived success of his

²⁵⁷ Eugène Hoffman, "Salon des Artistes Indépendants," *Journal des Artistes*, May 2, 1909.

²⁵⁸ Georges Battanchon, "Le Paysage Moderne parmi les Indépendants," *Journal des Artistes* (June 13, 1909): 6112. Original French: [. . .] un effet saisissant qui ne saurait passer inaperçu [. . .]; La composition de l'œuvre, d'un naturel et d'une simplicité pleins de grandeur, est pourtant très habilement trouvée pour obtenir le maximum d'effet.

²⁵⁹ Ibid.

methodology, demonstrating that Rouméguère's stylistic choices were recognized and appreciated by many of his contemporaries.

While a number of critics addressed the somatic or methodological qualities of the artist's paintings, most do not seem to have attempted to place Rouméguère among the larger movements of his day. How, exactly, Rouméguère should be classified is indeed a difficult question, as he does not fit easily into any of the established categories—not a trained Academic, not accepted by the traditional *Salons*, but not easily grouped with other artistic styles or movements, either. Rouméguère himself claimed no title but Independent, scrupulously avoiding associating himself too closely with other artists. He had the support of Dujardin-Beaumetz but also of Icart; he showed almost exclusively in the *Salon des Indépendants* but was awarded the *Palmes Académiques*. Rouméguère also did not hesitate to critique either the new guard or the old. He differed from the Academy in his previously demonstrated belief that practical color theory could and should be taught and criticized the Academy for its neglect of this area.²⁶⁰ While his dedication to capturing precise and fleeting effects of light echoes the ideas of the Impressionists, Rouméguère decried those who used only the “fashionable” high-key palette.²⁶¹ Perhaps most distasteful to him were the Fauves with their “green cows” and “purple men” that his unpublished short story described as harbingers of the downfall of true art—yet Rouméguère spent six years showing with the Fauves at the *Salon des Indépendants*.²⁶²

One of the few reviewers who did attempt to classify Rouméguère stylistically was Georges Battanchon, a particularly insightful and thorough critic. His 1911 article in *L'Oeuvre* entitled “Quelques Ateliers: Le Paysagiste J. -L. Rouméguère,” was the lengthiest examination

²⁶⁰Rouméguère, “Conférence,” 10-11.

²⁶¹ Rouméguère, “Conférence,” 7.

²⁶² Jean-Louis Rouméguère, “Le Paroxysme de l'Art,” (Musée des Jacobins), 2-3.

of Rouméguère's art since those published around his 1906 solo show and possibly the last major article on Rouméguère's paintings. This article addresses at greater length the same qualities of Rouméguère's work mentioned by other critics, praising the artist's ability to render an impressive and seemingly infinitely nuanced variety of effects—"seek out the most different combinations, imagine the effects the most near each other: you will not find, I believe, an hour or a state before which the brush of Rouméguère remains powerless"—and finding in the luminosity of Rouméguère's paintings a successful "translation of the most intense luminous effects."²⁶³ And yet, Battanchon noted, there was a characteristic simplicity to Rouméguère's work, an abundance of effects yet an avoidance of superfluous details: "[T]he compositions of the artist are of an extreme variety, most often of a simple truth and [. . .] always perfectly free, they never allow the suspicion of artifice or arrangement, which could facilitate the luminous effect, which remains, definitively, the ultimate goal of the works of Rouméguère."²⁶⁴ Battanchon also reiterated the comparison between Rouméguère's paintings and music, concluding his article with the declaration that these simple but varied canvases were "a perpetual song to the light, a song so subtle and so nuanced that it never repeats itself."²⁶⁵

This lengthy appraisal of Rouméguère's work built upon that of Battanchon's earlier article, published on June 13, 1909 in the *Journal des Artistes*, in which the critic had attempted to pinpoint the influences that had contributed to Rouméguère's particular, luminous style.

²⁶³ Battanchon, "Quelques Ateliers," 16. Original French: [. . .] recherchez les combinaisons les plus différentes, imaginez les effets les plus voisins, vous ne trouverez pas, je crois, une heure ou un état devant lesquels le pinceau de Rouméguère reste impuissant; and [. . .] traduction des effets lumineux les plus intenses[. . .]

²⁶⁴ Ibid. Original French: [L]es compositions de l'artiste sont d'une extrême variété, le plus souvent d'une vérité toute simple et [. . .] toujours parfaitement libres, elles ne laissent jamais soupçonner l'artifice ou l'arrangement qui pourrait faciliter l'effet lumineux, qui reste, en définitive, le but ultime des œuvres de Rouméguère.

²⁶⁵ Ibid. Original French: [. . .] un chant perpétuel à la lumière, chant si subtil et si nuancé qu'il ne se répète jamais.

Battanchon's evaluation remains especially perceptive. Writing about Rouméguère's work in an article on modern landscape, Battanchon stated:

I find in this work [. . .] the great qualities on which I have insisted, perhaps a bit lengthily: a solid, honest craftsmanship, like that of the landscapists of 1848, with all the precision, all the exactitude of observation that the Impressionists introduced, with, also, their colored shadows, but, here, in so true a note! I have not yet encountered two tendencies so different within one artist; and this gives something of the Classic [. . .] but this classic allure, far from being boring, is rejuvenating, refreshed by an inspiration where the sensitivity is more outward, more accessible, completely modern.²⁶⁶

Battanchon's analysis adeptly unifies what at first may seem to be contradictory elements within Rouméguère's work. Like the artists of the Barbizon, Rouméguère focused on the rendering of simple rural scenes with immediacy and naturalism, with a facture that gave his paintings a somatic quality. However, Rouméguère differed from these artists in his quasi-scientific quest to capture diverse and ever-shifting effects of light and atmosphere—concerns more readily associated with Impressionism. His emphasis on the importance of harmony, poetry, and idealization, meanwhile, led some to place him among the classicists. In reality, he was a bit of all of these—an artist living and working on the peripheries of several art movements; a provincial independent seeking his own balance among the competing movements and ideas of his day.

²⁶⁶ Battanchon, "Paysage," 6112. Original French: Je trouve dans cette œuvre [. . .] les grandes qualités qui m'ont fait insister, peut-être un peu longuement : une facture solide, probe, qui est celle des paysagistes de 1848, avec toute la précision, toute l'exactitude d'observation qu'on introduites les Impressionnistes, avec, aussi, leurs ombres colorées, mais, ici, dans une note si juste ! Je n'ai pas encore rencontre deux tendances aussi diverses chez un même artiste ; et cela donne quelque chose de classique [. . .] mais cette allure classique, loin d'être ennuyeuse, est rajeunie, rafraichie par une inspiration où la sensibilité est plus extérieure, plus accessible, toute moderne.

Section B: The Larger Context

These excerpts of reviews, the analysis of Rouméguère's method and ideals, and the establishment of the artist as a regional painter celebrated in his day, begin to delineate the context in which Rouméguère lived and worked. Battachon's evaluation of Rouméguère as an artist who drew elements from Barbizon school and Impressionist ideals, combining these with his own methodology to reach a result that is quasi-classical, quasi-academic, can be deepened through a brief exploration of each of these movements in relation to Rouméguère. Likewise, though no direct connection between Rouméguère and other painters of the southwest can be established based on current research, the development of landscape painting in this region, and particularly the Pyrenees, merits further consideration in relation to Rouméguère's art.

First, this study has already established that a somatic quality was characteristic of both the Barbizon painters' and Rouméguère's work, but art historian Brel-Bordaz went farther in naming specific Barbizon artists and their paintings in which she found similarities to a painting by Rouméguère. Brel-Bordaz saw parallels between Rouméguère's *sous-bois* paintings, namely *Symphony in Green* (*Symphonie en Vert*, n.d., figure 52), Constant Troyon's (1810-1865) *Course of Water through the Woods* (*Cours de l'eau sous bois*, c. 1845, figure 53), and Paul Huet's (1803-1869) *Morning Calm: Interior of the Forest* (*Calme du matin: intérieur du forêt*, c. 1852, figure 54).²⁶⁷ While all three scenes are similar in size—Troyon's is somewhat smaller—and all share the motif of a stream through the forest, Rouméguère's is significantly darker than the other two, focusing on a brilliant, almost gaudy green swath of illuminated trees seen through closer, deeply-shadowed trunks and branches, the illuminated foliage reflected in the water. *Evening Sunlight* (image 32), the *sous-bois* painting from the *Phases of Light*, shows an effect

²⁶⁷ Brel-Bordaz, "La Donation Rouméguère," 88.

that is closer to the Troyon and Huet's work in terms of the quality of light. However, there is also a difference in facture. Troyon and Huet employed a more diverse range of textures; especially in his later works, Rouméguère's forms carry a greater unity and sense of mass, although still maintaining enough of a painterly handling to stimulate a somatic experience.

The parallel between Rouméguère and the Impressionists comes from their shared interest in capturing specific, fleeting effects of light, though, as Battanchon pointed out, the two approaches were quite different:

The touch of Rouméguère is not that of Impressionism, such as one understands it, and such that, too often, one currently demands from an artist. Intelligently adapted to the dimensions of the canvas and of the subjects treated, it knows how to be large, and sufficiently vibrant, without destroying the contours or removing from the material the solidity that it requires. Sometimes thick and abundant, sometimes light, as if amused, and barely covering the canvas, it contributes to the effect with the dexterity of an able interpreter, who knows when to hammer or caress a keyboard.²⁶⁸

Despite Rouméguère's preference for harder outlines and more solid forms, his use of highly-mixed colors, and his distaste for what he considered too much emphasis on a light palette, several of the artist's works seem to show the influence of Monet. One little study of water lilies (figure 55) and several of poplar trees reminiscent of the Impressionist's paintings are among Rouméguère's works.²⁶⁹ Furthermore, the artist's penchant for working in series was similar to that of the Impressionists.

²⁶⁸ Battanchon, "Quelques Ateliers," 16. Original French: La touche de Rouméguère n'est point celle de l'impressionnisme, telle qu'on la comprend, et telle que, trop souvent, on l'exige actuellement d'un artiste. Intelligemment adaptée aux dimensions de la toile et aux sujets traités, elle sait être large, et suffisamment vibrante, sans pour cela détruire les contours ou enlever à la matière la solidité qu'elle réclame. Tantôt grasse et abondante, tantôt légère, comme amusée, et couvrant à peine la toile, elle contribue à l'effet comme le doigté d'un interprète habile, qui sait tour à tour marteler ou caresser un clavier.

²⁶⁹ Monet was painting his water lilies by the 1880s, so it is likely that Rouméguère was familiar with these later in his career.

There was, however, another significant divide between Rouméguère and the Impressionists unrelated to broad or narrow tonal range, different brushstrokes, or the use of a rationalized method as opposed to observation alone—their subjects. While their pure landscapes were celebrated, the Impressionists were also the painters of modernity and modern life. Monet painted not just waterlilies and Japanese bridges, but the Port of Argenteuil and the St-Lazare train station. Rouméguère's subjects remained simple and rural, without any evidence of the rapidly-changing world in which he lived.²⁷⁰

This, and his use of highly-mixed colors, is what gives Rouméguère's work the classical aspect that Jean de l'Hers remarked upon in his critique and that Battanchon, too, mentioned—albeit much more positively. Rouméguère's landscapes are not classical in the way that Nicolas Poussin's (1594-1665) are—no hints of Arcadia, no careful *fini*. They are perhaps more similar to those of Claude Lorrain (1600-1682), though Lorrain's brilliant skies are also mere backdrops, rather than the focal point that they so often became for Rouméguère. Still, Rouméguère's process of “distilling” the landscape, seeking an absolute, undisturbed harmony that yields a more perfect version of the natural scene does have some classical overtones. The formats and titles that Rouméguère gave his work also draw from what were by then established conventions—*études* and *notes de poche*, as well as paintings of “effects,” had gained Academic acceptance with the Barbizon artists. Where Rouméguère really differed from the Academy was in his emphasis on color over line, and his insistence that this could and should be taught.

That his supporters came from both the Academic and Independent sectors demonstrates that the two groups, while often at odds, were not always so; furthermore, as a landscape artist,

²⁷⁰ This was true even after World War I; I cannot find any significant difference that would separate paintings completed during or after the war from those that came before. The war may have turned Rouméguère into a bit of a recluse, but he continued to paint landscapes of absolute peace, calm, and light.

Rouméguère was working in a genre that was increasingly popular both within the *Académie* and outside of it. His theories, his work itself, and his status (or lack thereof) as an autodidact gained him the approbation and interest of a number of artists and reviewers who were open to new and different ideas pertaining to landscape. On the other hand, his mastery of half-tones, especially in the difficult-to-capture nuances of shadowed areas, would have been recognized and appreciated by Academic painters, and his carefully pre-mixed tones were closer to Academic techniques than the application of pure colors favored by the Impressionists and Post-Impressionists.

Stylistically, then, Rouméguère's work was more or less tangential to the major landscape movements of the nineteenth century—but, while his art was not destined to make a lasting name for him in Paris, Rouméguère should be remembered among the significant landscape painters of France's southwest, perhaps most of all for his Pyrenean landscapes. Including the *Phases of Light*, these place him among the generations of southwestern artists who have sought their subjects in these mountains.

The Pyrenees have attracted many painters from Toulouse and the southwest region—and even beyond. Eugène Delacroix (1798-1863) in 1845 made a visit here, filling a sketchbook with on-site renderings of peaks and torrents (figure 56).²⁷¹ Here Rosa Bonheur (1822-1899) placed her famous animals against snow-laden ridges (figure 57), and Gustave Doré (1832-1883) painted sublime, gushing waterfalls (figure 58). Landscapists Paul Huet, Jules Dupré, Théodore Rousseau, and Narcisse-Virgile Díaz de la Peña (1807-1876) (figure 59)—the artists of the Barbizon—all spent time here.²⁷² While the Pyrenees might inhabit a handful of these artists' works, however, the mountains came to dominate the work of numerous local landscape artists

²⁷¹ "Eugène Delacroix," The Morgan Library and Museum. Accessed November 1, 2018. <https://www.themorgan.org/drawings/item/217572>.

²⁷² Jean Robert, *Les Pyrénées Françaises Vues par les Artistes* (Lourdes: Musée Pyrénéen, 1974), 100-102.

such as Rouméguère. Though there was never a school of the Pyrenees, never so organized a community as that of the Barbizon painters, the draw of the great blue mountains captivated artist after artist, drawing them as the woods of Fontainebleau drew the painters of Paris.²⁷³

The beginnings of this fascination with the Pyrenees can be traced back at least as far as the start of the nineteenth century, to Jean Briant (1760-1799) and Pierre-Henri Valenciennes (1750-1819).²⁷⁴ Briant, the first conservator of the *Musée des Augustins* in Toulouse, traveled often to the Pyrenees and had begun an ambitious series of Pyrenean views before his untimely death in 1799.²⁷⁵ Today, the whereabouts of these paintings are unknown.²⁷⁶ Likely more influential was Valenciennes. Valenciennes is known as the father of the Neoclassical landscape, and to him is owed much of the increased interest in landscape that developed in nineteenth-century France. In 1799, Valenciennes published *Elémens de Perspective Pratique*, an introduction to landscape painting that met with great success, and his ideas continued to influence artists for the next century.²⁷⁷

Of course, it is impossible to know if Rouméguère read *Elémens de Perspective Pratique*. However, it is certainly plausible that Rouméguère had heard of the book, and it seems likely that the budding landscape painter, a proudly-proclaimed self-taught artist, would have looked to such writings for ideas and technical knowledge. Though Valenciennes' fame had peaked by the 1860s, his influence continued to be felt and his name known.²⁷⁸ This is illustrated by a letter that the landscapist Corot penned to his son in 1883.²⁷⁹ The elder Corot included for the younger a

²⁷³ In the 1974 Exhibition Guide *Les Pyrenees Françaises Vues par les Artistes*, director of the *Musée des Augustins* Denis Milhau notes that the rich tradition of Pyrenean painting has been overshadowed by the Barbizon artists.

²⁷⁴ Gaston, "Peintres Toulousains," 271 and 279.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 271.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 271.

²⁷⁷ Michael Andrew Marlais, John L. Varriano, and Wendy M. Watson, *Valenciennes, Daubigny, and the Origins of French Landscape Painting* (South Hadley: Mount Holyoke College Art Museum, 2004), 24.

²⁷⁸ Marlais, *Valenciennes*, 25.

²⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 24.

copy of *Elémens de Perspective Pratique*, which the artist described as “the work of the famous Valenciennes, an old book, but still the best and most practical treatment of basic principles.”²⁸⁰

Valenciennes was a native of Toulouse who, like Rouméguère, had gotten his start as a landscape painter in Italy—although Valenciennes was an academic student rather than an independent fugitive. However, many of Valenciennes’ ideas seem to echo in Rouméguère’s work. For example, one passage of *Elémens de Perspective Pratique* admonishes the artist that merely copying nature is not sufficient:

The Artist must have the talent to connect to the Spectator by some object of curiosity, or some subject that moves his senses; without which, as much as he faithfully copies Nature, his copy will remain cold and will not even be able to bear comparison with the original.²⁸¹

Even more striking, in both its similarity to the sentiments that Rouméguère expressed and the language that he used, is the passage of Valenciennes’ book that discusses the beauty of the Pyrenean region and the possibilities the mountains offered for painters. After several pages of extolling the virtues of specific locales, Valenciennes concluded:

Who has not seen [in the Pyrenees] these enchanted sites where the eye promenades over some of the most perfect paintings of all, because they are formed of the happiest effects of Nature, without experiencing regret at leaving them, and, even, without desiring to live in these delicious valleys?²⁸²

The brevity that we have imposed on ourselves does not permit us to multiply the descriptions of the mountains and valleys of the Pyrenees: one can judge, by those that we have already cited, what sights and what points of view they offer to the observer and to the Artist who knows how to see and choose the beauties that

²⁸⁰ Ibid., 25.

²⁸¹ Pierre-Henri de Valenciennes, *Elémens de Perspective Pratique*, (Paris: Chez l’Auteur, 1800), 482.

Original French: Il faut que l’Artiste ait le talent d’attacher le Spectateur par quelque objet de curiosité, ou quelque sujet qui émeuve ses sensations ; sans quoi il aura beau copier fidèlement la Nature, sa copie restera froide, et ne pourra pas même supporter la comparaison avec l’original.

²⁸² Valenciennes, *Elémens*, 625. Here, Valenciennes is quoting from Jean-Pierre Picqué’s *Voyage dans les Pyrénées Françaises*, published in 1789. Original French: Qui n’a vu ces sites enchantés où l’œil se promène sur des tableaux les plus parfaits de tous, puisqu’ils sont formes des plus heureux effets de la Nature, sans éprouver le regret de les quitter, et même sans désirer d’habiter ces vallées délicieuses ?

everywhere present themselves to their gaze in these interesting regions[.]²⁸³

Thus, though any direct link between Rouméguère and Valenciennes must remain speculative, there is an unmistakable echo of Valenciennes in Rouméguère's "The Pyrenees are not sufficient for you! [. . .] Nature is beautiful everywhere when one knows how to see it."²⁸⁴

Whether or not he studied Valenciennes, Rouméguère followed in the precedent established by the elder artist. As one of the first promoters of the landscape of France's western mountains, Valenciennes' exhortation to young artists to come and paint in the region encouraged the influx of artists in the years that followed. As art historian Marguerite Gaston writes:

In going to paint in the Pyrenees, the Toulousain artists followed the counsel of their illustrious compatriot Pierre Henri de Valenciennes. This very classic promotor of historical landscape counselled, from the beginning of the century, to go to the mountains in order to paint the 'sublime movements' of Nature. These landscapes offered enough to satisfy the taste for the picturesque, for heroic painting, and also for history painting [. . .].²⁸⁵

Economics also played a significant role in the presence of artists in the region. As travel to the Pyrenean thermal springs became popular among tourists, especially those from the Toulouse region, artists followed.²⁸⁶ The tourists provided a ready market for small works depicting the local landscape, and printmaking soon flourished as well. Like Valenciennes, some of the artists who frequented the Pyrenees made the mountains one subject among many. Others,

²⁸³ Valenciennes, *Eléments*, 626. Original French: La brièveté que nous nous sommes imposée, ne nous permet pas de multiplier les descriptions des montagnes et des vallées des Pyrénées: on peut juger, par celles que nous venons de citer, des sites et des points de vue qu'elles offrent à l'observateur et à l'Artiste qui sait voir et choisir les beautés qui se présentent par-tout a ses regards dans ces intéressantes contrées[.]

²⁸⁴ Rouméguère, "Réponse," 3. Original French: Les Pyrénées ne sont pas suffisantes pour vous !... [. . .] un artiste peut trouver, dans les deux ou trois kilomètres qui l'entourent, de quoi peindre toute la vie ; la nature est belle partout quand on sait la voir.

²⁸⁵ Gaston, "Peintres Toulousains," 279-80.

²⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 272.

however, built their careers around the imagery of the mountains. Among these early artists of the Pyrenees were Théodore Richard (1775-1836), General Lejeune (1775-1848), Joseph Latour (1806-1863) and his students Charles de Saint-Felix, Eugene Fil, and Eugene de Malbos (1811-1858), and Léon Soulié (1804-1862).²⁸⁷

Théodore Richard, a native of Millau, took up residence in Toulouse in 1823.²⁸⁸ His teacher, Jean-Victor Bertin (1775-1842), had been a student of Valenciennes, and was among the first French artists to embrace painting *en plein air*—a tradition that began in the Pyrenees in the early nineteenth century, at least as early as it did in the North.²⁸⁹ Somewhat paradoxically, a form of *plein air* painting in the style of Poussin had sprung up in the southern mountains.²⁹⁰ Like Rouméguère, Richard painted scenes of both the Massif Central and the Pyrenees, but it was the latter that dominated—scenes of Luchon, Valentine, Gamas, Pyolle; of rocks and torrents and especially trees.²⁹¹ *Vue du Pic du Midi de Pau et de la Forêt de Gabas* (figure 60), an 1835 painting today held by the *Musée des Augustins* in Toulouse, shows travelers seated on a ridge beneath a great, gnarled evergreen.²⁹² The scene has its share of implied drama—but perhaps no Pyrenean painter could rival the level of theater present in the works of Louis-François “The General” Lejeune, who translated the language of military paintings to the cliffs and crags of the southern mountains. His *La Chasse à l’Ours vers la Cascade du Lac d’Oo* (1834, figure 61) shows great bulbous peaks bathed in misty sunlight, the spray rising from the distant cascade, while the foreground is populated by a writhing mass of armed men, horses, bears, and dogs—with a giant bird of prey and a few mountain goats thrown in for good measure.

²⁸⁷ Ibid. No biographical information was available for Charles de Saint-Felix or Eugène Fil.

²⁸⁸ Ibid., 272.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 281, and Robert, *Les Pyrénées Françaises*, XXXI.

²⁹¹ Gaston, “Peintres Toulousains,” 273.

²⁹² Ibid, illustration.

Among the painters whose works were made into lithographs, Joseph Latour was perhaps the most prominent, painting and sketching primarily around the region of Luchon in a pleasant manner tending towards the Romantic—the style that dominated Pyrenean painting in the mid-nineteenth century.²⁹³ Latour, along with his students Eugene Fil and Eugene de Malbos, whom he frequently took with him on Pyrenean excursions, illustrated a book of 37 lithographs of the region.²⁹⁴ De Malbos went on to create illustrations for two other excessively—perhaps satiristically—Romantic books on the Pyrenees.²⁹⁵ Other printed books of the Pyrenees included Antoin Melling’s *Voyages Pittoresques* (1821-1826), Louise Sarazin de Belmont’s *Album des Pyrenees* (1831-1833), and Jaccottet’s *Souvenirs des Pyrenees* (1835-1841).²⁹⁶

More mysterious in their Romanticism were the works of Leon Soulié, who painted wispy clouds, dark mountain passes, and raging torrents and crumbling ruins along with street scenes of Toulouse. The play of light and shadow that fascinated Rouméguère emerges in Soulié’s paintings—the ever-shifting atmospheric effects that Rouméguère would attempt to render scientifically seem more the subject of Soulié’s images than the foreground figures or the ruined buildings (1824-62, figure 62). With the next generation of painters, the Romantic aspects of both the handling of light and the mountain geography itself began to diminish, giving way to a more scientific approach.

Geographer and painter Franz Schrader (1844-1924), a native of Bordeaux, was known as the “Corot of the Mountains”—a near-contemporary of Rouméguère who spent much time documenting the western mountains both scientifically and artistically, even founding the *Société*

²⁹³ Ibid., 277.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Ibid, 276-7.

²⁹⁶ Penet, *Gouffres*, 44.

de Peintres de Montagne in 1898.²⁹⁷ Schrader wrote and mapped extensively, and his early paintings were done with a scientist's eye for detail and exactitude. His later work grew looser, less exacting, more vibrant, taking on a more impressionistic touch and use of color (figure 63).²⁹⁸ Schrader, like Rouméguère, was fascinated not only by the land itself but also by the atmospheric effects that played out upon it—the way “the sky and the earth unite, merge, penetrate each other.”²⁹⁹ A description of Schrader's work as displayed at the 2008 exhibition *Gouffres, Chaos, Torrents, et Cimes: Les Pyrénées des Peintres* at the Musée Paul-Dupuy noted that he “worked on the juxtaposition of natural elements—the rock, the ground, the trees, the sky—and the atmosphere.”³⁰⁰ Though differing in style, Rouméguère and Schrader clearly shared a similar sensibility.

That the Pyrenees remained an enticing subject in the early twentieth century, especially for painters of the southern regions, is made clear by the catalogues of the *Salon des Indépendants*. In 1908, for example, a number of artists born or residing in the south submitted landscapes with titles mentioning the Pyrenees: Jean-Fabien Galey (1877-1966), Guillaume Dulac (1868-1922), Marcel Compayre, Lucien Gros (1845-1913), and Hubert Damelin-court(1884-1917).³⁰¹ Etienne Terrus (1857-1922), primarily known today for the recent discovery of dozens of inaccurately-attributed canvases in the museum bearing his name, was represented as well, titling his paintings in a manner similar to Rouméguère: *Vue d'Espira (Effet du matin)*, *Vue d'Espira (Effet du soir)*, *Sous bois*.³⁰²

²⁹⁷Penet, *Gouffres*, 44. This is the organization with whom Rouméguère was invited to exhibit, then denied.

²⁹⁸ Vincent Berdoulay and Helene Saule-Sorbe, “Franz Schrader Face à Gavarnie, ou le Géographe Peintre de Paysage,” *Mappemonde* 1999, n. 55 (1999): 35.

²⁹⁹ Penet, *Gouffres*, 44.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ *24eme Exposition*.

³⁰²Ibid., and “Etienne Terrus Museum in Elne Uncovers Fake Art in Collection,” BBC (April 28, 2018), <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-43933530> and *24eme Exposition*, 378-79.

Varying in technique—most showed Impressionistic or Post-Impressionistic stylistic tendencies, though Gros in particular tended towards Realism tinged with the Romantic—these painters, like Rouméguère, shared the Pyrenean mountain motif, as did another notable artist working during this time: Louis Buffin (1884-1967), native of Tarbes. The *Musée-Massey* in Lourdes has recently received a donation of Buffin's works at the bequest of his family—a ready subject for future scholarship.³⁰³ Buffin, nearly twenty years Rouméguère's junior, showed at the *Salon des Indépendants* from 1912 through 1914, overlapping with Rouméguère.³⁰⁴ His work was looser, brushier, his color more vivid and less delicate than Rouméguère's (figure 64), but both artists were driven by the motif of the mountains and by a fascination with light and color. Buffin, like Rouméguère, even explored in his work the different "phases of light."³⁰⁵

Though no solid evidence directly links Rouméguère to any of these artists, it would seem plausible that some at least knew of each other, especially as many of their careers overlapped. Perhaps future scholarship will clarify what, if any, relationship existed between the painters of the Pyrenees in the early twentieth century. Regardless of personal affiliation, however, their shared motif unites these artists across stylistic divides. Rouméguère's paintings clearly find their lineage in the works of Buffin, Terrus, Schrader, and their predecessors: those southwestern artists who, from Valenciennes onward, sought to capture the Pyrenees and surrounding landscapes in all of their horror, glory, grandeur, and harmony. His paintings

³⁰³ "Louis Buffin, don de ses œuvres," Musée-Massey, Accessed November 1, 2018, <https://www.Musée-massey.com/collections/hussards/nouvelle-acquisition?view=article&id=159:louis-buffin-don-de-ses-oeuvres-par-son-petit-fils&catid=2>.

³⁰⁴ Jean Monneret, *Catalogue Raisonné: Salon des Indépendants, 1884-2000* (Paris: Salon des Indépendants, 2000), 295. Buffin also showed at the *Salon des Indépendants* after WWI.

³⁰⁵ "Buffin, Louis (1884 Tarbes-1967 Bagnères-de-Bigorre)," *Viver et Rever la Montagne, 15 Juin-16 Septembre 2018, Liste des Auteurs*, Exposition Guide, Château Fort Musée Pyrénéen, Lourdes.

conveyed, and continue to convey, an interpretation of the *Midi* marked by harmony, poetry, and a palpable, “dazzling,” variety of atmospheric effects.

CONCLUSION

Traditionally, the study of late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century painting in France has focused on two groups of artists: those of the Academy and those involved in leading movements of radical change. The tensions, divides, and intersections of these groups, the ever-widening concept of what art could be and do, is, indubitably and justly, the overarching narrative of this era. Yet laboring alongside the entrenched Academics and the far-sighted avant-gardists whose works today fill textbooks were a myriad of minor artists whose own narratives often fall somewhere in between. In the interest of expanding the study of French art in breadth as well as depth, the stories and oeuvres of these lesser-known artists offer insight into the successes and struggles, theories and methods, of those working on the fringes of the Parisian art scene or within their own specific regions. It may be that the true worth of many of these artists is yet to be fully discovered, or even that their contributions may be better appreciated today than in their own time.

Jean-Louis Rouméguère is one such artist. Always grasping at success, never quite reaching it, the reputation that he gained in his nine-year public career faded as quickly as it had come. For about half a century, from the time of his death until the first retrospective of his work in 1974, Rouméguère's light-filled landscapes of the Gersois countryside and Pyrenean mountains languished in his former studio, though at the time of their creation, these works had been hailed by a number of critics for a method that was unique, personal, even new. Today, this seems an extraordinary appraisal, considering these serene, harmonious, poetic little landscapes were the contemporaries of the Fauvist, Cubist, and Futurist works that tore apart the conventions of art in ways that Rouméguère's paintings never could, that rendered his theories of

a scientific method of handling color to create naturalistic effects of light largely irrelevant. What need was there for such a theory, in the context of these bold new movements?

Yet one of the very characteristics that makes Rouméguère's paintings remarkable, that makes them worth conserving and studying even today, is their continued freshness—the rush of the blazing fire, the shiver of hazy sunlight on fresh-fallen snow, the grandeur of a mountain somehow confined within a few square centimeters. In its blend of somatic effect and “scientific” method, Rouméguère's art offered a unique response to the artistic ideas of his day. His paintings evoke a sensory experience through the artist's facture, but also through reduction of scale. The intense luminosity that Rouméguère captured was the result of both keen observation and methodical technique. His interest in light and color was common to his time, but his personal solution depended on the precise mixing of tones rather than the use of pure, divided colors—and, though Rouméguère's method never gained the following he sought, the vivid light of the *Midi* still radiates from these paintings. More than a hundred years after their creation, Rouméguère's works retain the very sense of atmosphere and immediacy that the artist so earnestly sought to capture.

Such artists demonstrate that, though the larger narrative of the history of art in France is reasonably well-defined, there remain any number of small gaps in our knowledge, especially concerning the art of the provinces, those regions far removed from the official Parisian Salons and the counter-movements that they spurred. This thesis begins to restore Rouméguère's place within the history of the art of his region, but it tells only a part of the story. Concerning the artists of the Pyrenees and France's southwest, certainly, there remain many possibilities for

future scholarship. My hope is that such research will allow some of these minor artists “unjustly unknown” to at last find their place within the rich and nuanced history of France’s art.³⁰⁶

³⁰⁶ Brel-Bordaz, “La Donation Rouméguère,” 75.

FIGURES

Figure 1: *Paris Metro Card Series* by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1913
Ten 3 x 6 cm paintings, oil on paper
Musée des Jacobins, Auch
@ musée des Jacobins- Auch

Figure 2: *Paris Metro Card Series* (detail) by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1913
3 x 6 cm, oil on paper
Auch, Musée des Jacobins
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Figure 3: *Paris Metro Card Series* (detail) by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1913
 3 x 6 cm, oil on paper
 Auch, Musée des Jacobins
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Figure 4: J.-L. Rouméguère in his studio
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Figure 5: *Phases of Light (Phases de la Lumière)* by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1905
 Ten paintings each 27 x 40 cm, oil on canvas
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Figure 6: *Phases of Light: No. 1, Dawn (Phases de la Lumière: No. 1, Aube)*
 by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1905
 27 x 40 cm, oil on canvas
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Figure 7: *Morning* by Vittore Grubicy di Dragon, n.d.

47.4 x 41.1 cm, oil on canvas

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

Image Credit: RMN-Grand Palais (Musée d'Orsay) / Hervé Lewandowski

Figure 8: *View of Dinant (Vue de Dinant)* by Hippolyte Boulenger, 1870

91 x 130 cm, oil on canvas

Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique

Image Credit: Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique / J. Geleyns

Figure 9: J.-L. Rouméguère's "Pocket box"
Auch, Musée des Jacobins
Photo by the author

Figure 10: *Autumn Sky in the Mountains (Ciel d'Automne en Montagne)* by J.-L. Rouméguère,
n.d.
193 x 130 cm, oil on canvas
Auch, Musée des Jacobins

Figure 11: *The Conflagration (L'Incendie)* by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1909
 193 x 130 cm, oil on canvas
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Figure 12: *Effect of Morning in the Mountains (Effet du Matin dans les Montagnes)* by J.-L. Rouméguère,
 before 1906
 60 x 200 cm, oil on canvas
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Figure 13: *States of the Full Moon: The Twilight Glow (Etats de la Pleine Lune: Aux Lueurs Crépusculaires)*
 by J.-L. Rouméguère, before 1906
 27 x 40 cm, oil on canvas
 Auch, Musée des Jacobins
 Photo by the author

Figure 14: *States of the Full Moon: At Nightfall (Etats de la Pleine Lune: A la Nuit Tombante)*
 by J.-L. Rouméguère, before 1906
 40 x 27 cm, oil on canvas
 Auch, Musée des Jacobins
 Photo by the author

Figure 15: *States of the Full Moon: In the Middle of the Night (Etats de la Pleine Lune: En Plein Nuit)*
 by J.-L. Rouméguère, before 1906
 40 x 27 cm, oil on canvas
 Auch, Musée des Jacobins
 Photo by the author

Figure 16: *States of the Full Moon: Reflections of the Dawn (Etats de la Pleine Lune: Aux Reflets de l'Aube)* by J.-L. Rouméguère, before 1906
 40 x 27 cm, oil on canvas
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 Photo by the author

Figure 17: *Scales of Morning (Gammes du Matin)* by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1913
 Ten paintings each 5 x 9 cm, oil on canvas
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Figure 18: *Morning Mists (Brume du Matin)* by J.-L. Rouméguère, before 1906
 5 x 10 cm, oil on wood
 Private collection
 Photo by the author

Figure 19: *Morning Snow (Neige au Matin)* by J.-L. Rouméguère, before 1906
oil on canvas
Private collection
Photo by the author

Figure 20: *Snow in the First Rays of Light (Neige au Premiers Rayons)* by J.-L. Rouméguère
before 1906
Oil on wood
Private collection
Photo by the author

Figure 21: Landscape by J.-L. Roumégère, n.d.
Oil on game token
Private collection
Photo by the author

Figure 22: *Salon des Indépendants* ticket with sketch by J.-L. Roumégère, c. 1914
Graphite on paper
Private collection
Photos by the author

Figure 23: *Exposition J.-L. Rouméguère* ticket with sketch by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1906
 Graphite on paper
 Private collection
 Photos by the author

Figure 24: *Footbridge over the Gave (La Passerelle sur la Gave)* by Eugene Isabey, 1856
 116 x 133 cm framed, oil on canvas
 Pau, Musée des Beaux-Arts de Pau
 Image Credit: Art.rmngp.fr, RMN-Grand Palais / Michèle Bellot

Figure 25: *Solitary Voyager in a Gorge (Voyageur Solitaire dans une Gorge)* by J.-L. Rouméguère, n.d.
 73 x 54 cm, oil on canvas
 Auch, Musée des Jacobins
 Photo by the author

Figure 26: *Note de poche* by J.-L. Rouméguère, n.d.
 5 x 10 cm, oil on cardboard
 Auch, Musée des Jacobins
 Photo by the author

Figure 27: Tree study by J.-L. Rouméguère, n.d.
 Graphite on paper
 Private collection
 Photo by the author

Figure 28: *Spring Morning in the Gers (Matin de Printemps Gersoises)* by J.-L. Rouméguère, before 1906
 34 x 56 cm, oil on canvas
 Auch, Musée des Jacobins
 Photo by the author

Figure 29: *Phases of Light: No. 10, Night (Phases de la Lumière: No. 10, Nuit)* by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1905
 27 x 40 cm, oil on canvas
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Figure 30: *Mountain Haze (Brumes en Montagne)*, by J.-L. Rouméguère, n.d.
 19 x 27 cm, oil on canvas
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Figure 31: *Landscape with Cattle at Limousin* by Jules Dupré, 1837
 78.7 x 130.8 cm, oil on canvas
 New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art
 Image credit: Metmuseum.org

Figure 32: *Phases of Light: No. 7, Evening Sunlight (Phases de la Lumière: No. 7, Soleil du Soir)*
 by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1905
 27 x 40 cm, oil on canvas
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Figure 33: *Phases of Light: No. 7, Midday Sun (Phases de la Lumière: No. 7, Soleil du Midi)*
by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1905
27 x 40 cm, oil on canvas
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Figure 34: *Studies for a Conference* by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1906
36 x 66 cm, oil on panel
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Photo by the author

Figure 35: *Phases of Light: No. 5, Morning Sunlight (Phases de la Lumière: No. 7, Soleil du Matin)*
by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1905
27 x 40 cm, oil on canvas
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Figure 36: *Studies for a Conference* by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1906
5 x 10 cm each, oil on panel
Auch, Musée des Jacobins
Photo by the author

Figure 37: "Painting representing an isolated house in the country, situated in the center of the painting, behind an embankment planted with trees," by J.-L. Rouméguère, 1889
 24.5 x 19, oil on wood
 Auch, Musée des Jacobins
 Photo by the author

Figure 38: Landscape by J.-L. Rouméguère, before 1900
 oil on wood
 Private collection
 Photo by the author

Figure 39: *Phases of Light: No. 8, Sunset (Phases de la Lumière: No. 7, Coucher du Soleil)*
by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1905
27 x 40 cm, oil on canvas
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Figure 40: *Landscape at Daybreak (Paysage au Lever du Jour)* by J.-L. Rouméguère, n.d.
9 x 14 cm, oil on canvas
Auch, Musée des Jacobins
Photo by the author

Figure 41: *London, Parlement. Sun Piercing through the Fog (Londres, le Parlement. Trouée de soleil dans le brouillard)*, by Claude Monet, 1904

81.5 x 92.5 cm, oil on canvas

Paris, Musée d'Orsay

Image credit: @photo musée d'Orsay / rmn, Musee-Orsay.fr

Figure 42: *Moonlight (Clair de Lune)* by J.-L. Rouméguère, n.d.

27.6 x 40.6 cm, oil on canvas

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Figure 43: *Note de poche*, signed and labeled “Indépendants 1911” on reverse, by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1911.
 5 x 10 cm, oil on wood
 Auch, Musée des Jacobins
 Photo by the author

Figure 44: *Note de poche* by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1911.
 5 x 10 cm, oil on wood
 Auch, Musée des Jacobins
 Photo by the author

Figure 45: Detail of *The Conflagration (L'Incendie)* by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1909
 193 x 130 cm, oil on canvas
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Figure 46: *Snow at Sunset (Neige au Coucher du Soleil)* by J.-L. Rouméguère, before 1906
 92 x 74 cm, oil on canvas
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 Photo by the author

Figure 47: *Note de poche* sunsets by J.-L. Rouméguère, n.d.
 Six paintings each 5 x 10 cm, oil on wood
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Figure 48: *Morning Light in the Valley (Soleil du Matin dans Vallée)* by J.-L. Rouméguère, n.d.
 27 x 41 cm, oil on canvas
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Figure 49: *Before the Rain (Avant la Pluie)* by J.-L. Rouméguère, n.d.
 27.2 x 19.3 cm, oil on canvas
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Figure 50: *Scales of Morning*, detail, by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1913
 5 x 9 cm, oil on canvas
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Figure 51: *Blazing Atmosphere in Winter (Embrassement de l'Atmosphère en Hiver)* by J.-L. Rouméguère, c. 1908
 51 x 52 cm, oil on canvas
 Auch, Musée des Jacobins
 Photo by the author

Figure 52: *Symphony in Green (Symphonie en Vert)* by J.-L. Rouméguère, n.d.
 55 x 63 cm, oil on canvas
 Auch, Musée des Jacobins
 Photo by the author

Figure 53: *Course of Water through the Woods (Cours de l'eau sous bois)* by Consant Troyon, c. 1845

32 x 46 cm, oil on wood

Paris, Musée du Louvre

Image credit: Art.rmngp.fr, RMN-Grand Palais / Christian Jean

Figure 54: *Morning Calm, Forest Interior (Calme du Matin, Intérieur de Forêt)* by Paul Huet, c. 1852

56 x 68 cm, oil on canvas

Paris, Musée du Louvre

Image credit: Art.rmngp.fr, RMN-Grand Palais (musée du Louvre)/ Franck Raux

Figure 55: Water Lilies (*Nénuphars*) by J.-L. Rouméguère, n.d.
 5 x 10 cm, oil on wood
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Figure 56: *Pyrenees Mountains in the Fog, Eaux-Bonnes* (*Montagnes des Pyrénées dans la brume, Eaux-Bonnes*)
 by Eugène Delacroix, 1845
 26.3 x 35.3 cm, watercolor on laid paper
 New York, The Morgan Library and Museum
 Image credit: TheMorgan.org

Figure 57: *Herd of Sheep in the Pyrenees* by Rosa Bonheur, 1868
 38 x 54.5 cm, watercolor
 New York, Dahesh Museum of Art
 Image credit: DaheshMuseum.org

Figure 58: *Cascade of the Trou d'Enfer, Lys Valley (La Cascade du Trou d'Enfer dans la Vallée du Lys)*
 by Gustave Doré, 1882
 76 x 54 cm (framed), watercolor
 Pau, Musée des Beaux-Arts
 Image credit: (C) RMN-Grand Palais / Thierry Ollivier; Art.rmngp.fr

Figure 59: *The Pyrenees, the Peak of the Midi de Bigorre* by Narcisse-Díaz de la Peña, 1871-72
 21.2 x 27 cm, oil on panel
 Cleveland, The Cleveland Museum of Art
 Image credit: ClevelandArt.org

Figure 60: *View of the Pic du Midi from Pau and the Gabas Forest (Vue du Pic du Midi de Pau et de la Forêt de Gabas)* by Theodore Richard, 1835
 147 x 192 cm, oil on canvas
 Toulouse, Musée des Augustins
 Image Credit: Musée des Augustins, Daniel Martin

Figure 61: *The Bear Hunt towards the Waterfall of Lake Oo (La Chasse à l'Ours vers la Cascade du Lac d'Oo)* by Louis-François Lejeune, 1834
152 x 181 cm

Toulouse, Musée des Augustins
Image Credit: Musée des Augustins, Daniel Martin

Figure 62: *Landscape (Paysage)* by Léon Soulié, 1824-1862
46 x 54 cm, oil on canvas

Toulouse, Musée des Augustins
Image Credit: Musée des Augustins / Ville de Toulouse – musée des Augustins

Figure 63: *The Pic du Vignemale at Sunset (Le Pic du Vignemale au Couchant)* by Franz Schrader, c. 1900
 27 x 35 cm, oil on wood
 Private collection
 Image credit: projetsdepaysage.fr

Figure 64: *Landscape* by Louis Buffin, early 1900s
 pastel
 Ville de Tarbes
 Image Credit: Musées-Occitanie.fr

APPENDIX I

Original Titles of Paintings Shown at the *Cercle de la Librairie*, 1906

Museum ID	Museum Title	Number near Signature	Size	1906 Exhibition Title
979.014	Brumes dans la Vallée (Haze in the Valley)	139	200cm x 60cm	Effet de Matin dans les Montagnes (Effect of Morning in the Mountains)
979.018	Soleil Couchant (Setting Sun)	153	100cm x 81 cm	Lever de Soleil (Sunrise)
979.021	Gel sur Neige (Ice on Snow)	178	92cm x 74 cm	Neige au Coucher du Soleil (Snow at Sunset)
979.033	Matin de Printemps Gerso (Gerso Spring Morning)	81	34cm x 56cm	Matin de Printemps (Spring Morning)
979.036	Effet de Soleil en Montagne (Effect of the Sun in the Mountains)	82	58.5cm x 55cm	Une Eclaircie (A Sunny Spell)
979.038	Fournaise Crépusculaire, Voiture attelée (Blazing Sunset Fire, Carriage)	94	48.4cm x 57.4cm	Fournaise Crépusculaire (Sunset Blaze)
979.047	Matin sur les Coteaux (Morning on the Hills)	172	55cm x 38cm	Soir orageux (Stormy Evening)
979.048	Poussière d'Or (Gold Dust)	176	38cm x 55 cm	Poussière d'Or (Gold Dust)
979.053.1	Phases de la Lumière--N.1 Aube (Phases of Light--N.1, Dawn)	140	26cmx18cm	(1) L'aube (The Dawn)
979.053.2	Phases de la Lumière--N.2 Aurore (Phases of Light--N. 2 Aurora)	141	26cmx18cm	(2) L'aurore (The Aurora)
979.053.3	Phases de la Lumière--N. 3 Lever de Soleil (Phases of Light--N.3 Sunrise)	142	26cmx18cm	(3) Le lever du soleil (The Sunrise)
979.053.4	Phases de la Lumière--N. 4 Effet du Matin (Phases of Light--N. 4 Morning Effect)	143	26cmx18cm	(4) Effet du matin (Morning Effect)
979.53.5	Phases de la Lumière--N. 5 Soleil du Matin (Phases of Light--N. 5 Morning Sun)	144	26cmx18cm	(5) Soleil du matin (Morning Sun)
979.53.6	Phases de la Lumière--N. 6 Soleil du Midi (Phases of Light--N. 6 Midday Sun)	145	26cmx18cm	(6) Soleil de midi (Midday Sun)

979.53.7	Phases de la Lumière--N. 7 Soleil du Soir (Phases of Light--N. 7 Evening Sun)	146	26cmx18cm	(7) Soleil du soir (Evening Sun)
979.53.8	Phases de la Lumière-N. 8 Coucher de Soleil (Phases of Light--N. 8 Sunset)	147	26cmx18cm	(8) Au coucher du soleil (At Sunset)
979.53.9	Phases de la Lumière--N. 9 Crépuscule (Phases of Light--N. 9 Dusk)	148	26cmx18cm	(9) Le crépuscule (Dusk)
979.53.10	Phases de la Lumière--N. 10 Nuit (Phases of Light--N. 10 Night)	149	26cmx18cm	(10) La nuit (The Night)
979.055.1	Etude pour Conférence en 6 tableaux--note de poche (Studies for Conference in 6 paintings--pocket note)	49	10 cm x 5 cm	Derniers reflets Crépusculaires (Last Twilight Reflections)
979.055.2	Etude pour Conférence en 6 tableaux--note de poche (Studies for Conference in 6 paintings--pocket note)	50	10cm x 5 cm	Crépuscule (Twilight)
979.055.3	Etude pour Conférence en 6 tableaux--note de poche (Studies for Conference in 6 paintings--pocket note)	51	10cm x 5 cm	Route au matin (Morning Road)
979.055.4	Etude pour Conférence en 6 tableaux--note de poche (Studies for Conference in 6 paintings--pocket note)	52	10cm x 5 cm	Etude d'atmosphère violette (Study of a purple atmosphere)
979.055.5	Etude pour Conférence en 6 tableaux--note de poche (Studies for Conference in 6 paintings--pocket note)	53	10cm x 5 cm	Matinée d'hiver (Winter Morning)
979.055.6	Etude pour Conférence en 6 tableaux--note de poche (Studies for Conference in 6 paintings--pocket note)	54	10cm x 5 cm	Fin d'été au Crépuscule (End of the Summer at Twilight)
979.060	Effet de Brume (Hazy Effect)	69	27.2 cm x 41 cm	Brume du matin (Morning Haze)

979.063	Effet de Lune sur Ruine (Effect of the Moonlight son a Ruin)	138	41cm x 27 cm	Effet de Lune (Effect of Moonlight)
979.068	Un Incendie (A Conflagration)	108	40cm x 27 cm	Un Incendie (A Conflagration)
979.069	Coucher de Soleil sur Rochers (Sunset on the Rocks)	63	40.5cm x 27.2 cm	Coucher de Soleil (Sunset)
979.071.1	Phases de la Lune--N.1 Dernières Heures du Crépuscule (Phases of the Moon--N. 1 Last Hours of Dusk)	64	27cm x 40 cm	Etats de la Pleine Lune (1) Aux Lueurs Crépusculaires (State of the Full Moon (1) The Twilight Glow)
979.071.2	Phases de la Lune--N. 2 Après le Lever de la Lune (Phases of the Moon--N. 2 After the Moonrise)	65	27cm x 40 cm	Etats de la Pleine Lune (2) A la Nuit Tombante (At Nightfall)
979.071.3	Phases de la Lune--N. 3 Clair de Lune (Phases of the Moon--N. 3 Moonlight)	66	27cm x 40 cm	Etats de la Pleine Lune (3) En Pleine Nuit (State of the Full Moon (3) In the Middle of the Night)
979.071.4	Phases de la Lune--N. 4 Reflets de l'Aurore (Phases of the Moon--N. 4 Reflections of the Aurora)	67	27cm x 40 cm	Etats de la Pleine Lune (4) Aux reflets de l'aurore (States of the Full Moon (4) At the Reflection of the Aurora)
979.078	Village et Falaises au Lever du Soleil (Village and Cliffs at Sunrise)	107	27.2cm x 40cm	Au Lever du Soleil (At Sunrise)
979.085	Aurore (Aurora)	79	40cm x 22cm	Crépuscule (Twilight)
979.09	Peupliers à l'Aube (Poplars at Dawn)	80	46cm x 48cm	Crépuscule (Twilight)
979.091	Eaux-vives sous Soleil Dore (Lively Waters under a Golden Sun)	157	46cm x 48cm	Coucher Soleil (Sunset)
979.102	Crépuscule Clair (Clear Sunset)	135	27,4cm x 19cm	Crépuscule Clair (Clear Sunset)
979.104	Etude de 3 Lumières (Study of 3 Lights)	37	27 cm x 19cm	Temps Brumeux (Hazy Weather)
979.110	Nuit: Village et Ses Lumières (Night: Village and Its Lights)	32	27cm x 19cm	Crépuscule (Twilight)
979.111	Aurore (Aurora)	125	19.2cm x 27.2cm	Aurore (Aurora)
979.113	Restes de Neige (Remnants of Snow)	130	19.2cm x 27.2cm	Gel sur Dégel (Frost on Thaw)
979.114	Incendie (Conflagration)	168	27cm x 19cm	Incendie (Conflagration)

979.117	Lever de la Lune (Moonrise)	120	19cm x 27.2cm	Lever de Lune (Moonrise)
979.130	Printemps (Spring)	126	19.3cm x 27cm	Printemps (Spring)
979.224	Note de poche: Soleil du Soir (Pocket Note: Evening Sun)	1	10cm x 5 cm	Soleil du Soir (Evening Sun)
979. 228	Etude de Champs (Field Study)	2	9.7cm x 5.1cm	Etude de Champs (Field Study)
979.229	Fleurie de Rose avec un Tronc d'Arbre en Haut. . . (Flurry of Roses with a Tree Trunk Above. . .)	5	10cm x 5 cm	Rosiers par un Soleil Voile (Roses by a Veiled Sun)
979.230	Un Nuage sur la Montagne	6	10cm x 5 cm	Un Nuage sur la Montagne (A Cloud on the Mountain)
979.231	Note de Poche: "Etude de temps clair" (Pocket Note: "Study of Clear Weather")	7	10cm x 5 cm	Matinée de Juillet (July Morning)
979.232	Note de Poche: "Soleil du soir sur les rochers" (Pocket Note: Evening Sun on the Rocks)	8	10cm x 5 cm	Soleil du soir sur de Roches (Evening Sun on the Rocks_
979.233	Chemin et deux arbres côté gauche au premier plan (Path and two trees on the left side of the foreground)	9	10cm x 5 cm	Note d'azur (Note of Azure)
979.234	Soleil (Sun)	11	10cm x 5 cm	Village au lever du soleil (Village at Sunrise)
979.236	Empourprées (Flush)	13	10cm x 5 cm	Coucher de Soleil (Sunset)
979.237	Plan et des pre-montagnes en arrière-plan. . . (Ground and Foothills in Background. . .)	15	10cm x 5 cm	Une Eclaircie (A Sunny Spell)
979.238	Note de poche: "Etude du soleil au matin"	16	10cm x 5 cm	Etude de Soleil au Martin (Study of the Sun in the Morning)
979.239	Une Rivière Traversant un Pré (A River Transversing a Field)	17	5cm x 10cm	Etude de Lumière sur le Soleil Couchant (Study of Light on the Setting Sun)
979.240	Note de Poche: "Brume et soleil du Matin," (Pocket Note: Morning Haze and Sun)	18	5cm x 10cm	Brume et soleil (Haze and Sun)

979.241	Note de Poche: "Coucher de Soleil," (Pocket Note: Sunset)	19	10cm x 5cm	Coucher de Soleil (Sunset)
979.242	Note de Poche: "Etude d'atmosphère," (Pocket Note: Atmospheric Study)	21	10cm x 5cm	Montagnes au soleil couchant (Mountains at Sunset)
979.243	Note de Poche: "Matin Rose et Mauve," (Pocket Note: Pink and Mauve Morning)	22	10cm x 5cm	Un matin (A Morning)
979.245	Note de Poche: "Crépuscule d'hiver," (Pocket Note: Winter Twilight)	26	5cm x 10cm	Crépuscule d'hiver (Winter Twilight)
979.246	Note de Poche: "Matin sur le. . ." (Pocket Note: "Morning on the. . .")	27	10cm x 5cm	Note sur le crépuscule (Note on the twilight)
979.247	Note de Poche: "Etude de. . ." (Pocket Note: "Study of. . .")	28	10cm x 5cm	Etudes de lointains (Studies of far away)
979.248	Note de Poche: "Etude crépuscule," (Pocket Note: "Twilight Study")	29	5cm x 10cm	Etude du jaune au crépuscule (Study of Yellow at Twilight)
979.249	Note de Poche: "Etude de soir," (Pocket Note: "Evening Study")	31	5cm x 10cm	Soir (Evening)
979.250	Note de Poche: "Crépuscule," (Pocket Note: "Twilight")	32	10cm x 5cm	Crépuscule (Twilight)
979.251	Note de Poche: "L'Aube," (Pocket Note: "The Dawn")	33	10cm x 5cm	A L'Aube (At Dawn)
979.252	Note de Poche: "Temps Brumeux" (Pocket Note: Hazy Weather)	37	10cm x 5cm	Temps Brumeux (Hazy Weather)
979.253	Note de Poche: "Note de sous-bois," (Note de Poche: "Notation of Undergrowth")	38	5cm x 10cm	Sous Bois. (Undergrowth)
979.254	Pre-montagnes bleutées et cieux chargés de nuages, (Foothills Turned Blue and Skies Charged with Clouds)	39	5.2 cm x 10cm	Etude de nuage (Cloud study)

979.255	Note de Poche: "Etude sur un matin jaune" (Pocket Note: Study on a Yellow Morning)	40	5cm x 10cm	Etude sur une matinée d'hiver (Study on a Winter Morning)
979.256	Note de Poche: "Etude d'atmosphère," (Pocket Note: Atmospheric Study)	41	5cm x 10cm	Atmosphère du matin (Morning Atmosphere)
979.257	Note de Poche: "Lever de Lune," (Pocket Note: Moonrise)	42	5cm x 10cm	Lever de Lune (Moonrise)
979.258	Note de Poche représentant un lac. . . (Pocket Note representing a lake)	44	10cm x 5cm	Etude de lointains (Study of the distance)
979.259	Note de Poche: "Crépuscule," (Pocket Note: "Twilight")	45	5cm x 10cm	Crépuscule (Twilight)
979.260	Note de Poche: "Etude de. . ." (Pocket Note: "Study of. . .")	47	5cm x 10cm	Un temps clair (Clear Weather)
979.261	Note de Poche représentant au premier plan un pré bordé d'arbres. . . (Pocket Note representing in the foreground a field bordered by trees)	48	5cm x 10cm	Neige au Soleil Couchant (Snow at Sunset)
979.262	Note de Poche représentant un paysage vu d'une colline voisine. . . (Pocket Note representing a landscape seen from a neighboring hill. . .)	55	10cm x 5cm	Premiers Jours de Printemps (First Day of Spring)
979.263	Note de Poche: "Etude du Ciel," (Pocket Note: Sky Study")	57	10cm x 5cm	Eclaircie de juin (A Sunny Spell in June)
979.264	Note de Poche représentant les abords d'une maison. . . (Pocket Note representing the approach to a house)	59	10cm x 5cm	Vieux moulin au soleil (Old Mill in the Sun)
979.265	Note de Poche: "Crépuscule" (Pocket Note: Twilight).	73	5cm x 10cm	Après le coucher du Soleil (After the Sunset)

N/A	N/A	58	5cm x 10cm	Brumes du Matin (Morning Mist)
N/A	N/A	76		Neige au Premiers Rayons (Snow in the First Rays of Light)
N/A	N/A	128		Neige au Matin (Morning Snow)

APPENDIX II

Paintings Exhibited (Except in 1906)

Exhibition Title, Place, Date	Title of Artwork/ Museum Accession Number
Salon de L'Union Artistique, Toulouse, 1905	Les Phases de la Lumière (Phases of Light)/ 979.053.1-.10
Salon des Indépendants, Paris, 1908	Embrasement de l'Atmosphère en Hiver (Blazing Atmosphere in Winter)/ 979.051
	Ombres et Reflets Crépusculaires (Sunset Shadows and Reflections)
	Coucher de Soleil (Sunset)
	Neige au Lever du Soleil (Snow at Sunset)
	Soleil Sous-bois (Sunlight Woods)
	Lever de Lune (Moonrise)
Salon des Indépendants, Paris, 1909	Un Incendie (A Conflagration)/ 979.013
	Soleil du soir dans les Hautes-Pyrénées (Evening Sun in the High-Pyrénées)
Salon des Indépendants, Paris, 1910	Lever du Lune (Moonrise)
	Brume du Matin (Morning Haze)
	Un Gave (Effet du Soir) (A Gave [Evening Effect])
	Coucher de Soleil (Sunset)
	Effet de Soleil Couchant (Effect of Setting Sun)
	Lever de Lune (Moonrise)
Salon des Indépendants, Paris, 1911	Une Gorge au Coucher du Soleil (A Gorge at Sunset)
	Temps Orageux au Coucher du Soleil (Stormy Weather at Sunset)
	Montagne au Soleil Levant (Mountain at Sunrise)
	Effet de Neige au Matin (Effect of Morning Snow)
	Colline au Coucher du Soleil (Hill at Sunset)
	Notes d'une Boîte de Poche (Pocketbox Notes)
Salon des Indépendants, Paris, 1912	Effets de Lumière Crépusculaire (Notes d'une Boîte de Poche)
	Lever de soleil (Sunrise)
	Au Coucher du Soleil (At Sunset)
Salon des Indépendants, Paris, 1913	Gammes du Matin (Scales of Morning)/ 974.054.1-.10

The information used in this table was taken from the entry "Roumégère, J.-L., Né à Auch, Gers," in the *Dictionnaire des Indépendants, 1884-1914*, 2003.

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