# La Chimera: Prep Sheet

Art Appreciation · Screening Tuesday 15 September · Discussion Wednesday 16 September, 8:00 · Side 1. Read it before Tuesday and bring it Wednesday.

**The film:**

*La Chimera*. Directed by Alice Rohrwacher. Italy, 2023. 131 minutes. Italian, with English subtitles.

The film is set in Tuscany in the 1980s. Arthur is an Englishman just out of prison. He can feel where Etruscan tombs lie underground. A group of tombaroli, tomb robbers, dig where he points, and a dealer called Spartaco sells what they find to people you never see.

The Etruscans lived in central Italy from about the ninth to the first century BCE. They buried their dead with objects: black-fired pottery called bucchero, painted terracotta, bronze mirrors and vessels, gold. The objects in the film are props, but every type is real, and every type is among the most looted in the world.

**Three things to watch for:**

Notice them when they happen. A time and a few words in your head is enough.

- **The moment an object is found.** What happens to it, physically, in the minutes after? What happens to the place it came from?
- **The picture turns upside down.** When? Who is upside down, the man or the world?
- **Someone sings.** Who, and what does the song tell you that the pictures do not?

We stop at about 1:25, the crane. You finish the film that night from the file Doğan sends after class, about 45 minutes. Do not look up the ending.

**Wednesday's discussion:**

Prepare one scene for each discussion question below. You will not need to speak on every question, but be ready to contribute to any of them.

- **Three words.** Unit 2 is narrative (where a still image puts time), myth (a story the room already knows, so the picture can lean on it) and allegory (a thing that also means something else, and you keep both). The film never says any of the three. Find them.
- **What survives.** In the big tomb the painted walls lose their color as the air comes in. What did the tomb do while it was closed? What does the object do once it is out in the light?
- **One object, three owners.** The goddess. What she did for the person she was buried with, what she does for Arthur, what she does for Spartaco (on the projector, about 1:33).
- **The story underneath.** A musician goes into the underworld to bring back the woman he loves, and is told not to look back. Where did you first suspect this was that story? Where does the film finally tell you?
- **The thread.** At about 2:04 a red thread comes out of the ground and will not come free. What is it? What does it stand for? Hold both.
- **Upside down.** About 38 minutes in, the picture flips. Who is upside down, and what is the film claiming?
- **Who tells the story.** The singer, about 52 minutes: "What's the point of judging then, the tombaroli are just a drop in the ocean." Why does the film need a man with a guitar to say this?
- **Italia's question.** About an hour in: "Does it belong to everyone or no one?" Nobody in the film answers her. You will.

Support every answer during the hour with a specific scene. If you begin with "I felt", explain what happened in the scene that led to that response.

# La Chimera: One Question

Side 2 · One page or less · Due Monday 21 September 2026 at 10:45

**Task / objectives:**

Answer **one** question about objects, art and who the past belongs to. Use *La Chimera* and one example from outside the film to support your position.

Write **one page or less**. Submit it to *La Chimera: One Question* on ManageBac by **10:45 on Monday 21 September 2026**.

**Guide:**

Put the question number at the top. Use Wednesday's discussion to develop your answer, but write it yourself. Refer to at least one specific scene and explain what happens. Your outside example could be an object you own, a museum, a story from home or something else you know.

1. Who does an object belong to once the people who made it are gone?
2. The tomb was safe for two thousand years because nobody looked. Is a thing better off seen or left alone?
3. Is there a difference between an artifact and a piece of art? Where is the line, and who draws it?
4. A goddess becomes a lot number. What is lost when a thing is given a price? Is anything gained?
5. The tombaroli, the dealer, and the museum each claim the past. Who has the strongest claim?
6. The Etruscans left nothing written. What survives of a people when only their objects remain?

The viewing and discussion sheet remains available for reference.

**Rubric:**

Marked out of 100. Each criterion is worth 25 marks.

| Criterion | What to include |
|---|---|
| Position | State your position in the first sentence and maintain it. |
| Film evidence | Name one scene and explain what happens. |
| Outside example | Use one relevant example from outside the film. |
| Counterargument | End with the strongest argument against your position. Explain whether it changes your answer. |