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## Ishtar

**Madeleine Cody:** Hello. I'm Madeleine Cody, a Brooklyn Museum Research Associate for Ancient Egyptian, Classical, and Ancient Middle Eastern Art. Ishtar, referred to as the Queen of Heaven by the people of ancient Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq), was the most important female deity in their pantheon, and a goddess who possessed multiple aspects and powers. The colors of the plate and runner, mainly shades of gold with green highlights, are significant in that green was considered Ishtar's sacred color and gold represents Ishtar's grandeur. The gold is meant to echo further some of the colors of Mesopotamian architecture and landscape. On the plate, Ishtar is depicted with multiple breastlike forms that allude to her role as a giver of life; these forms are paralleled in the stitching around the capital letter on the runner. The capital letter incorporates Italian shading to repeat the visual quality of the penwork in the plate. The geometric forms of Ishtar's runner are taken from the architectural motifs of ancient Mesopotamia. The stepped edges mimic the ascending steps of a ziggurat, while the interior edge of the arch is done in brick stitch, a reference to the glazed tiles that cover the Babylonian Ishtar Gate. The Heritage Floor names around Ishtar's place setting commemorate other deities with comparable power and also reflect the many ways that the larger concept of the goddess was changing. A number of historical figures are named, including powerful queens and priestesses.

*For more information about these objects, be sure to visit [www.brooklynmuseum.org](http://www.brooklynmuseum.org)*