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Amazon

Maura Reilly: According to Greek mythology, the Amazons were a group of warrior women who lived northeast of ancient Greece between approximately 1900 and 1200 B.C. The Amazon Warrior holds an important place at *The Dinner Party*, representing these legendary female warriors and the significance of unified communities of women. The color palette of this place setting—black, red, and white—is traditionally used in artistic representations of the Amazons. This plate's imagery includes abstracted breasts covered in gold and silver, representing the breastplates that Amazon warriors wore in battle, and numerous other symbols often associated with the Amazons. These include two double-headed axes, a white egg, a red crescent, and a black stone. In addition to their use in battle, double-headed axes were an element of goddess worship in Crete, the center of the Minoan world at that time, and they were also traditionally used by women to cut down trees. The white egg is a symbol of fertility; the red crescent is tied to the worship of the Great Mother and her connection with the moon. And the black stone was the earliest incarnation of the goddess in Sumer. The runner echoes this imagery, with the addition of snakeskin and lacing that reference Amazonian battle attire. The names of individual Amazon women are inscribed on the Heritage Floor beneath this place setting, including Antiope, Hippolyte, and Penthesilia.