

LIFE AT HOME

Egyptian houses were built of bricks made of mud and straw, dried in the sun. In towns, some of the finer houses were two stories high and had multiple rooms and toilets. Their walls were plastered and decorated with geometric patterns and scenes of plants and animals. During hot weather, many people slept on the roof, and sometimes cooked there, too. Household waste was buried in pits or thrown in the river or into the street. Water was drawn from public or private wells.

HOME FURNISHINGS

Well-to-do homes had tiled floors and painted walls. Furniture was minimal and included low stools, chests, tables, and beds. Poor people slept on mats, with headrests that had protective charms to ward off scorpions and bad dreams.



stone board game with pottery playing pieces

baboon figurine with protective mouth

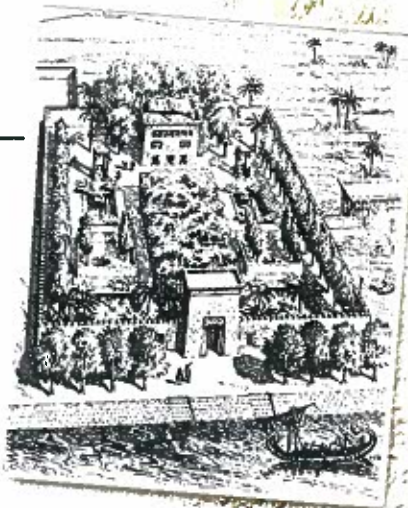
Egyptians had large families, and children lived at home until their early teens. Many toys and games have been found in excavations, and children often had birds or dogs as pets. Boys went to school, but girls helped at home.

"I am the most beautiful tree in the garden, And for all times, I shall remain. The beloved and her brother Stroll under my branches, Intoxicated from wines and spirits, Steeped in oil and fragrant essences."

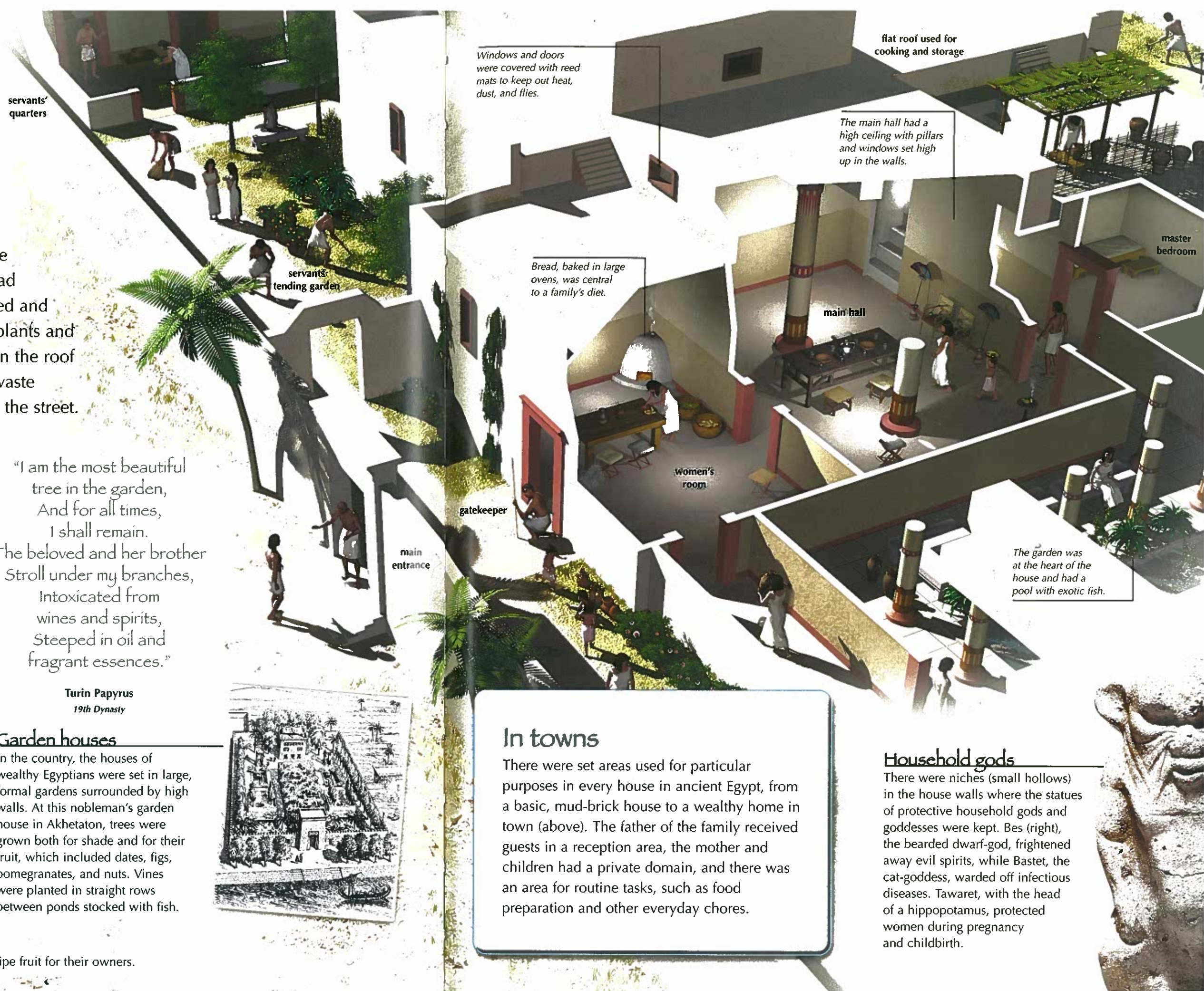
Turin Papyrus 19th Dynasty

Garden houses

In the country, the houses of wealthy Egyptians were set in large, formal gardens surrounded by high walls. At this nobleman's garden house in Akhetaton, trees were grown both for shade and for their fruit, which included dates, figs, pomegranates, and nuts. Vines were planted in straight rows between ponds stocked with fish.



Baboons were trained to climb fig trees and pick the ripe fruit for their owners.



In towns

There were set areas used for particular purposes in every house in ancient Egypt, from a basic, mud-brick house to a wealthy home in town (above). The father of the family received guests in a reception area, the mother and children had a private domain, and there was an area for routine tasks, such as food preparation and other everyday chores.

Household gods

There were niches (small hollows) in the house walls where the statues of protective household gods and goddesses were kept. Bes (right), the bearded dwarf-god, frightened away evil spirits, while Bastet, the cat-goddess, warded off infectious diseases. Tawaret, with the head of a hippopotamus, protected women during pregnancy and childbirth.

