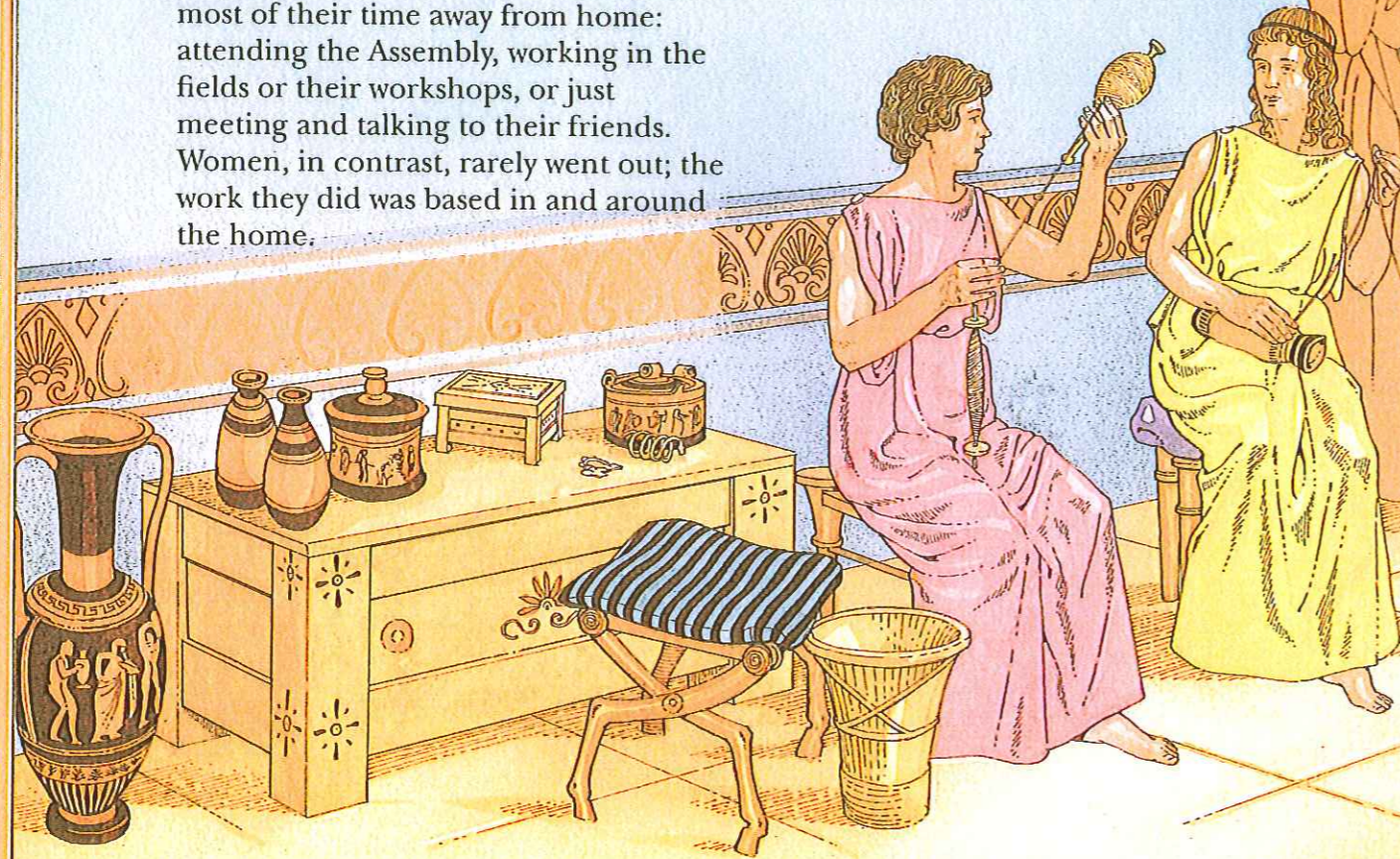


# Women at Home

Athenian women lived very different lives to men. Men spent most of their time away from home: attending the Assembly, working in the fields or their workshops, or just meeting and talking to their friends. Women, in contrast, rarely went out; the work they did was based in and around the home.

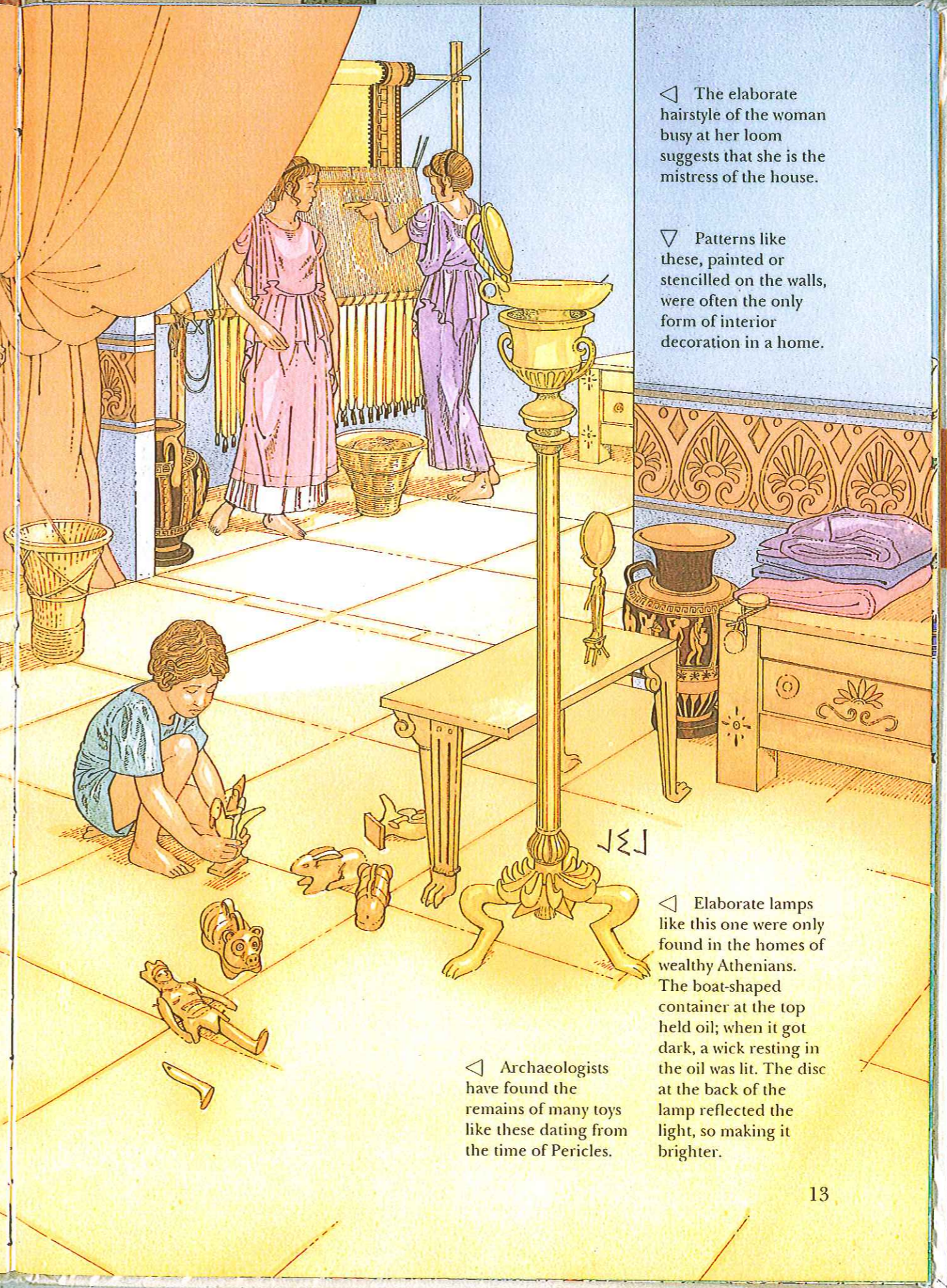


Athenian households were very self-sufficient. Each family spun and wove the thread to create the cloth from which they made their clothes. They ground their own flour and made their own bread, and preserved fruit and vegetables to eat in winter. This was all done by women.

Girls did not go to school, so their mothers educated them at home. They learnt to spin and weave, to cook and sew, to care for the sick and look after babies and children.

Most Athenian housewives had slaves to help them, so girls had to learn how to give orders to slaves and how to organize the running of a home for when they married.

Women were not allowed to meet or entertain men (except relatives) on their own, but they could go out to visit female friends or relatives. They also went to the theatre – a very popular entertainment. Even so, they would be accompanied by a man – their husband or a slave.



◁ The elaborate hairstyle of the woman busy at her loom suggests that she is the mistress of the house.

▽ Patterns like these, painted or stencilled on the walls, were often the only form of interior decoration in a home.

◁ Elaborate lamps like this one were only found in the homes of wealthy Athenians. The boat-shaped container at the top held oil; when it got dark, a wick resting in the oil was lit. The disc at the back of the lamp reflected the light, so making it brighter.

◁ Archaeologists have found the remains of many toys like these dating from the time of Pericles.