

4. Society and people



Composite vessel, 2100-2000 BC

Pyrgos, Limassol, Department of Antiquities, Cyprus

The impact of cultural interaction is evident on all levels of ancient Cypriot society. At least three languages were used in the island (Greek, Phoenician and the incomprehensible “Eteocypriot”, which was probably the most ancient speech of Cypriote people) suggesting the long co-existence of different population groups. Administrative documents include royal correspondence between the king(s) of Cyprus and the Pharaoh of Egypt, as well as inscriptions in various languages and scripts, and coins with Greek and Phoenician marks.

Artistic iconography and personal ornaments incorporate many foreign elements, suggesting purposeful emulation of “international” styles by members of local elites.

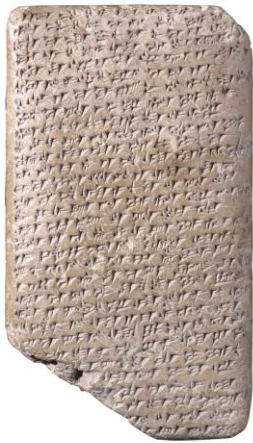
At the same time, more humble objects, such as clay figurines and vases indicate more earthly concerns (e.g. the cultivation of land, the raising of kids) and a close adherence to age-long traditions.



Figurine of female holding infant, 750-475 BC

Nicosia-Hill of Ayios Georgios, Department of Antiquities, Cyprus

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'Amarna letter' EA 34 mentioning *Alashiya* (Cyprus),
Egypt, British Museum



Silver coin (*siglos*) of Evelthon's successors of Salamis,
500-480 BC, Department of Antiquities, Cyprus