

**F-23 : THERMOLUMINESCENCE DATING OF AN EARLY BRAHMI
SCRIPT IN SRI LANKA**

Mohan Abeyratne; Cultural Triangle Project, Colombo.

Brahmi is the first indigenous form of writing to have developed on the Indian Sub continent and is ancestral to all South Asian Scripts in use today, which have long been suspected to having an antiquity beyond 250 B.C. In 1969 excavations at the Citadel of Anuradhapura, among the finds of early historic layer was a bone point which Deraniyagala postulated had been used as a writing "styli". In India similar

bone styli have been found in contexts dated to 1000 - 600 B.C. This had led Deraniyagala to suggest that writing was extant in India 1000 - 600 B.C. at least in the North of India. Excavation in 1984 - 1989 at the Citadel of Anuradhapura (Mahapali Hall) 05 pot sherds appeared in a basal early historic layer bearing inscriptions of early Brahmi which was dated by C¹⁴ to (1) 538 - 370 B.C. (2) 627 - 579 B.C. The author suggested that C-14 dates are prone to various anomalies such as variation of C-14 density, cosmic ray etc. Miono and others have shown in Japan that C-14 dates show high ages after 4000 B.C., T.L. Dating carried out by the author on pottery found in the same layer as inscribed pottery gave dates of 562 - 390 B.C., 547 - 382 B.C., 572 - 399 B.C., 563 - 390 B.C. (Random error only). These results indicate that it is probable that Aryans who migrated to the Island in the 6 B.C. would have brought with them a knowledge of the system of writings.