This thesis is a study of the Pre- and Proto-historic cultures of South-Western Andhra Pradesh - an area for the present purposes, covering the whole of Anantapur district and the western part of Kurnool district. Very little was known of the pre-history of this area before the middle of the nineteenth century. Since then its rich archaeological remains attracted the attention of some well known geologists and a few amateur archaeologists.

The earliest exploration by C.J. Felly and Captain Meadows Taylor in the fifties and sixties of the last century resulted in the recording of a large number of megalithic monuments in Rayadurg and Dharmavaram taluks in Anantapur district and Adoni taluk in Kurnool district. Beginning from 1885, Robert Bruce Fotte, a geologist, brought to light several sites of the Late and New Stone Ages in the northern part of the region, particularly, in the present Gooty and Uravakonda taluks.

However, practically no work was done in this region since Bruce Fotte's discoveries, though extensive remains of Neolithic Culture were discovered in the adjoining Bellary and Raichur districts of Mysore by late Professor B. Subbarao and Dr. F.R. Allchin. It was Dr. Allchin's important work on ashmounds which stimulated my interest in that problem.

In view of the archaeological antiquity and potentiality of the region, the present work was undertaken at the kind suggestion of my teacher Professor H.D. Sankalia. My initiation into field archaeology began in January 1965, when
I participated in the excavations at Sanganskallu, near Ballary town. At this time, I also had an opportunity of assisting Prof. Sankalia in the excavation of a microlithic site in a nala bed close to Sanganskallu village.

Professor Sankalia was primarily responsible for my excavations at Palavoy in Anantapur district. He initially sanctioned money from the Institute funds for enabling me to meet the excavation expenditure. I am deeply beholden to him for this and for his valuable guidance, encouragement and inspiration at every stage of my work.

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The excavations at Palavoy were carried out under the direction of Dr. Z.D. Ansari, Reader in Field Archaeology, Deccan College whose association encouraged me to learn much about field archaeology, particularly, the methods of excavation. To him I am ever grateful for his help.

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V Reddy
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