

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I owe an enormous debt of gratitude to many people who assisted me well beyond their duty during my PhD and taught me about science, archaeology, more generally, about life.

Firstly, I thank my supervisor Prof. P. Ajithprasad. His insights, critical thinking and gentle direction have made this thesis far more than it would otherwise have been. His kind assistance always made me feel prepared. Equally (in fact more than equally), I am also thankful to him for making the Prehistoric archaeology teaching more interesting and adventures that made me to develop an interest in Prehistoric studies.

Secondly, I am grateful for the support of my teacher and mentor Prof. K. Krishnan for his endless support right from the beginning of my journey as a master's student in the department. It is difficult for me to imagine myself in Baroda and in this department without his support and encouragement.

I feel fortunate to have a mentor and friend like Dr Vrushab Mahesh who constantly supported me throughout this research beyond his limits. I learned a lot about academics and life from him. I am very grateful to him for extending academic, personal and financial support whenever I needed without any hesitation. The only thing I am unable to learn from him, is financial management, even though he tried hard to teach that did not work out fine.

I am indebted to Mr Govind Damaraju for extending all the support I need to settle in Baroda and for employing me in his restaurant. Without his support, I would not have completed my master's and would not have travelled this far in academics.

I am very grateful to my best friend Ms Sunita Rajput for her support beyond her boundaries. Thanks to her stupid ideas about writing and passing the exams. I do not remember a single day without having a fight with her even I am not in Baroda. She is very kind; an awful cook and it would have been a boring journey in Baroda without her. I am indebted to Mr Zakir Khan for all the support he extended to me during difficult times. He is not only a good friend but a brother and family member.

I am also thankful to my teachers in the Department of Archaeology and Ancient History; Mr. Prathapachandran, Prof. Sushmita Sen, Mr Bhupesh Pathak and Dr Urmi Biswas for their support and encouragement.

Thanks are due to Archaeological Survey of India, Govt. of India and Department of Archaeology and Museums, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh for granting me permission to conduct explorations and excavations in the Prakasam District. I extend my thanks to Mr P. Suresh, deputy director of the of the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Govt. of Andhra Pradesh for his kind help.

I am also grateful to several people at other institutions with whom I got a chance to work as an academic collaborator. I am indebted to Dr Naveen Chauhan for allowing me to work in Luminescence Laboratory, Physical Research Laboratory, Ahmedabad and providing training in methods of OSL dating. The time I spent the PRL and the discussions with Dr Naveen are the best moments of my academic career. Thanks to my good friend Ms Monika Devi from Physical Research Laboratory for helping with OSL sample measurements, age calculations. I do not hesitate to say that without her help the OSL ages presented in this research could not be possible. Thanks also due to other scientists and researchers in PRL; Prof. Ashok Singhvi, Dr Naveen Juyal, Mr. Vinayak, Dr Madhvi Dabhi, Dr Komal Sharma, Dr Kartika, Mr. Shantanu and Ms. Mallika for the wonderful company in the lab. Thanks are due to Prof. Satish Sanghode, Department of Geology, Savitribhai Phule University, Pune for allowing me to process and measure soil samples for mineral magnetics and his kind assistance in the field.

I am very grateful to Prof. Stanley Ambrose, Illinois University, Urbana, USA for his encouragement and analysis of stable isotopes of carbonate nodules. He is very kind to provide comments and suggestions on my grant proposals and manuscripts. I sincerely thank Dr Antje Voelker and Dr Fatima Abrantes from IPMA, Lisbon, Portugal for their encouragement and agreeing to analyse samples for biomarkers and phytoliths. Unfortunately, due the Covid -19 lockdown I was unable to send samples to their laboratory. However, they encouraged me constantly and reviewed, commented on my grant proposals. Thanks, are also due to Professor (retired) Ravi Korisettar, Dharwad University, for his support and encouragement from the beginning of my research. He kindly allowed me to see the lithic material from Jwalapuram excavation stationed at Ballari. I am thankful to Prof. Vijaya Sathe for the taxonomic analysis faunal remains from Motravulapadu. A large vote of thanks must also go to the local villagers who worked with me in Motravulapadu, Retlapalle, Vemulapadu, Hanumanthunipadu, Ardhavedu particularly Mr Malydri from Motravulapadu.

I am indebted to various funding agencies for providing financial support for this research. I am thankful to University Grants Commission for supporting me through the award of UGC-NET fellowship. Thanks to the National Geographic Society for granting me Early Career Grant to investigate the YTT associated archaeology. Thanks are due to the Wenner-Gren Foundation for awarding me the Dissertation Fieldwork Grant to conduct first season of excavations at Motravulapadu. Thanks to the Leakey Foundation for granting me the Research Grant to excavate fossil bearing horizons at Motravulapadu. Thanks, are also due to the Nehru Trust for Collections at Victoria and Albert Museum for granting me the Small Study Research Award to conduct explorations along the Paleru river valley. Thanks to Prehistoric Society for granting me the travel award and to Black Trowel Collective Microgrants for their support during the Covid pandemic.

I am thankful to number of people including my colleagues, seniors, juniors from the Department and from various other institutions. I am indebted to Dr James Blinkhorn for his constant support and discussions on Indian Palaeolithic. He was very kind to analyse soil samples from Retlapalle and reviewing the grant proposals and manuscripts. I am thankful to Dr Parth Chauhan, IISER, Mohali for the academic discussions and encouragement. I am thankful to my classmates Ms Garima Singh, Ms Oyni Tatak, Ms Akakshna Choudary, Ms Shruti Sharma and seniors from the department Mr Avindandan Mukherjee, Mr Gopal Iyer, Ms Navjot Kaur and juniors: Mr Aditya Singh, Mr Varun Vyas, Ms Swati Verma, Mr Akash Pandey, Mr Prasanna Mallik, Ms Gita rani, Ms Neelima, Mr Abhishek Roy, Ms Pratishtha Mukherjee, Mr Prakasah Rathod, Mr Divynash Kumar Sinha, Ms Neha Ati, Ms Puja Kumari for extending support during the fieldwork and artefact analysis. Special thanks Mr Shashi Mehra for his support during the fieldwork in the upper Gundlakamma valley.

I am extremely grateful to Prof. TimmaReddy, Prof. Vijaya Prakash (retired from Department of Anthropology, Andhra University) and Prof. Murali Mohan (Professor, Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Acharya Nagarjuna University for their support and encouragement during the beginning of this research.

Special thanks to Mr Gopesh Jha for accompanying me during my first season of fieldwork in Prakasam District. I would say his two-wheeler driving skills are amazing. I thank him for introducing me to Mr Roshan Paladugu with whom I am looking forward to work in future.

Thanks are to Ms. Jonica Ella for the isotopic analyses of the faunal remains from Motravulapadu.

I wish to extend my thanks to the non-teaching staff of the department Ms Iqbal Sheik (Lalabhai), Mr Yagnesh Dave, Mr Kanti Parmar, Mr Rajesh Brahmatt, Mr Mahesh, Mrs Hansaben, and Mr Sukhram Ratva for their kind support. Special thanks to Mr Bhupesh Pathak, for all the support and encouragement.

My friends have been of great support during this journey. I thank Dr Ritvik Balvally, Dr Dhaval, Mr Ravindra Devra, Mr Tanamy Goswami and Mr Srisamarth for all the good times. I greatly miss the company of Dr Ritvik and Dr Dhaval.

Finally, I owe everything to my parents Mrs Padma and Mr Ramanaiah; brother Mr Vineel Kumar; sister Ms Anusha and my fiancé Ms Sujatha for all their love and support. Without them, I would not have been able to do this, and I am sincerely grateful to them for always being there.

Devara Anilkumar