Because I strongly favor international and interdisciplinary research collaboration, more of my publications are co-authored than is the norm. For example, I have published a great deal about the Upper Paleolithic, based on research at the caves of el Conde, Morín, el Pendo, el Juyo, and Altamira. I have also written articles about measurement, education, statistical methods, and improvements in techniques for data recovery, most of which appeared in papers or books co-authored with J. González Echegaray or others. Fascinating though I think the results of such work may be, I have avoided republishing co-authored articles in this book so that its faults will be entirely my own. In recent years, I have been increasingly concerned with the study of Medieval religious symbolism, research that is outside the limits of this book. Consequently, the chapters presented in this volume are only a small selection from the much more numerous papers that I have published (alone or with others) during the course of my career. I believe that they are a representative cross-section of my thinking about the Paleolithic past. I found these pages quite interesting while I wrote them and am confident that my audience will also find something of value here.

The reader will have noted that none of the articles I have chosen deals with gender in prehistory. Despite the fact that I helped train one of the most active and
famous of the “feminist” archeologists, no concerned party will have found anything here concerning gender roles in the accumulation of prehistoric residues. I have no doubt that stone tools or cave paintings could have been produced by Paleolithic people of any sex (and many ages), but the evidence we would need to prove that any activity was performed by either men or women is simply lacking. I am not just trying to avoid the issue. In other publications, I have tried to suggest that women’s roles in prehistory were as important as men’s and to state why I think that must be the case. In fact, in research at el Juyo I indicated the reasons why I thought the complementarity of sex roles was indicated by evidence from the “sanctuary.” But on that occasion I was surprise-attacked by my feminist students for having dared to suggest that a particular range of activities—sewing, shellfish gathering, and so forth—had traditionally been ascribed by ethnographers to women. I did not insist on that interpretation of the el Juyo evidence, but my assertion about previous ethnographic observations was quite correct. If anything, my students should have criticized me for (inconsistently) using ethnographic analogy.

One might be inclined to ask why an archeologist trained in the United States decided to work mostly outside the Americas. That puzzled the late William A. Ritchie, who was New York State Archaeologist when as a student I was a crew member on his excavations. Years later, he asked me why I chose not to work in “my own home state.” I explained that I was interested in the behavior of our very early ancestors, which I could not study in New York. He seemed to find that answer more or less satisfactory, but he clearly had his reservations. The chapters in this book would have made my reasons clearer. I only regret that Bill cannot read them now.

The papers I have chosen for inclusion here reflect to some extent the development of my thought about the Paleolithic. I formulated some of the ideas expressed here, including those about the uses and abuses of substituting analogy from some ethnographically known group for reasoning from the real archeological evidence, and the need for more care in interpreting archeological “food remains” at a time when I was still a graduate student, while others only occurred to me later, in the course of what has been a long professional career. I have long been aware that before one can study a phenomenon, one needs to know what it is and how many kinds of it there are. Some of what has been seen as my “legalistic” inclination is really due to an intense concern for defining terms and for pushing recovery techniques as far as possible, given constraints on time and available resources.

The chapters in this collection have been arranged to lead the reader through the somewhat twisted pathways of my thinking about prehistory. Starting with more theoretical meanderings that are more or less divorced from the Paleolithic context, they proceed through considerations of the Paleolithic in general and then the particular Cantabrian situation, to a more specific treatment of each of the three major Paleolithic industrial stages: Lower, Middle, and Upper. The chapters on the Upper Paleolithic are based on my study of Paleolithic art; I have excluded many papers on my excavation experience for reasons stated above. The last chapter discusses the benefits of international collaboration in scientific research, a topic about which I feel very strongly.
These chapters make no claim to present all sides of discussions about my conclusions or to represent the latest tendencies in archeological research. I believe that those conclusions about the Paleolithic in general, the meaning of residues from Torralba, the nature of Mousterian facies, the irrelevance of artifact similarities or differences to the study of genetic relationships between hominids, the significance of decorations in the cave of Altamira, and others are correct and will eventually become part of mainstream archeology, even those where there is now some disagreement about particular interpretations. Whatever the case, I have been a producer rather than an armchair consumer of archeological data for more than forty years, and I offer the product of the researches synthesized here as a permanent part of archeology for others to consider and study.

When I began Paleolithic research in Spain in 1962, it seemed as though one could count the number of Spanish and foreign scholars working in the same field on one’s fingers, and the majority of them, mostly those of the older generation (who held down the few available museum positions), had attitudes and used methods that had pretty generally been discarded elsewhere by the time of the Spanish Civil War. That has now changed for the better, and a vast increase in university positions has provided employment for dozens of younger scholars, many of whom have as modern an outlook (and use tests that are also as up-to-date) as do their counterparts anywhere. I take some pride in the fact that they generally think about the past in the same way that I do, even when they seem to be unaware of that fact. I am confident that their research will involve innovations that lead to a revolution in our understanding of the past.

As I said in the foreword, I hope that some of these chapters will stimulate further Paleolithic research. The future of our discipline is in the hands of a new generation. Perhaps those younger investigators will find that I have indicated some dead ends that lead no further and that they should not follow, or that I have shone a fitful light along some more productive paths. That, in any case, is my ardent hope. If I have succeeded I shall be amply rewarded.