Professor Straus has done archeological research in Spain and Portugal (as well as in France and Belgium) for 40 years, and since 1996 he has been directing excavations in El Miron Cave (Cantabria, Spain) together with Prof. M.R. Gonzalez Morales, uncovering a cultural sequence ranging from the late Middle Paleolithic to the Bronze Age, 41,000 BP-AD 1400. Prof. Straus is the Leslie Spier Distinguished Professor of Anthropology and long-time editor of UNM’s Journal of Anthropological Research.

Prof. Straus will describe the long, rich record of Stone Age humans in Iberia in this illustrated lecture. “The human settlement of Europe began in the Iberian Peninsula, about 1.4 million years ago. Over the course of time, successive species—Homo antecessor, Homo heidelbergensis, Homo sapiens neanderthalensis and Homo sapiens sapiens—have adapted to the diverse and changing landscapes of what are today Spain and Portugal. Indeed humankind in Europe has survived repeated Ice Ages by seeking refuge in Iberia, as well as in the two other Mediterranean peninsulas. The Neanderthals evolved from populations of early Homo—very well represented in the Castilian sites of Atapuerca—about 300,000 years ago and some of the last Neanderthals survived until about 30,000 years ago in southern Portugal and Spain (including Gibraltar). It was in northern Spain that cave art (in Altamira) was first recognized some 125 years ago as the work of anatomically modern Upper Paleolithic people (about 40,000-13,000 years ago) and some of the oldest and most spectacular cave and open-air rock art in the world is now known at hundreds of sites there and in eastern and southern Spain and Portugal. The ways of life based on hunting, fishing and gathering gradually came to an end across the Peninsula during a transition that spanned the end of the Last Glacial and beginning of the present Interglacial, culminating with the adoption of agriculture and animal husbandry between about 7000-6000 years ago.”

The lecture will be held from 4:00-5:00 p.m., with a reception following afterward until 6:00 p.m.
The UNM Hibben Center is located on Redondo Dr., just north of Martin Luther King Jr. Ave.
The entire event is free and open to the public. For more info, please contact the LAII at laii@unm.edu or 505.277.2961.