

erase negative, senesce within about 50 divisions, and are usually difficult to isolate and grow. Hematopoietic and mesenchymal stem cells have had limited success, in part because of their inability to be easily cloned, manipulated, and expanded. These are important features that limit the usefulness of somatic stem cells for the development of safe, efficacious, and cost-effective cell therapies for the millions of patients with chronic degenerative diseases.

In less than 3 years of work in a few laboratories, undifferentiated human ES cells have been shown to be genetically stable, immortal, clonable, and pluripotent (4). Clearly, not all questions are answered, but the point raised by Rocanova and co-authors will likely not significantly affect the use of human ES cells for human therapeutic applications.

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4. M. Amit *et al.*, *Devel. Biol.* **227**, 271 (2000).

## More About Duikers in Ancient Egypt

IN HIS LETTER "WERE THERE DUKERS IN ancient Egypt?" (2 Mar., p. 1701), Nicolas Manlius describes a figure in a mural from an ancient Egyptian tomb that resembles the Jentink species of duiker (*Cephalophus jentinki*). Duikers have not been listed among the fauna of ancient Egypt, but on the basis of several lines of evidence, Manlius suggests there might have been an isolated duiker population that persisted in ancient Egypt north of other duiker populations and that served as the source for the mural figure.

While preparing my dissertation *The Funerary Sacrifice of Animals During the Predynastic Period* (1), I came across the following information. Although most animal burials (not to mention interment of disarticulated bones from food offerings) of the predynastic period [~3200 to



3050 B.C. (2)] were rarely identified as to species, in a few instances attempts were made to do so. Brunton reported the skull and leg bone of a duiker as a food offering in a predynastic grave at Matmar (in the Badari region) dated to the Naqada III period (3).

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#### References and Notes

1. D. V. Flores, thesis, Univ. of Toronto (1999).
2. Dates for the cultural phases of the predynastic period are a matter of debate. The dates given here are from B. Adams, *Predynastic Egypt* (Shire Publications, Buckinghamshire, U.K., 1988).
3. G. Brunton, *Matmar, British Museum Expeditions to Middle Egypt, 1929-1931* (Quaritch, London, 1948), p. 24 and p. 29. The grave described was an unregistered one in the 200 series.

## CORRECTIONS AND CLARIFICATIONS

REPORTS: "X-ray pulses approaching the attosecond frontier" by M. Drescher *et al.* (9 Mar., p. 1923). In Figure 5, the number "76.0" at the base of the y axis should have read "75.0."

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## O.N.C.E. INTERNATIONAL AID AWARDS FOR TECHNOLOGICAL R&D FOR THE BLIND

The Spanish National Organisation of the Blind (O.N.C.E.) has announced the II ONCE International Aid Awards for Research and Development into Technologies for the Blind, the purpose of which is to reward, and contribute towards furthering, research that improves the quality of life and the process of social and labour integration of all blind and visually impaired persons.

The ONCE R&D Aid Awards are granted every two years to those innovations and advances in such areas as IT, telecommunications, biotechnology and engineering that involve the creation, adaptation and use of machines or computer programs, whose development and practical application lead to improvements for the blind and visually impaired.

The economic aid packages are as follows:

- One Award of thirty million pesetas (or the equivalent in Euros)
- Two Awards of ten million pesetas each (or the equivalent in Euros).

A Committee of experts of recognised prestige in the fields of typhlotechnology, biotechnology, computing, engineering and other scientific areas shall evaluate the different research projects presented for this contest.

Participants may be individuals or research organisations who, either personally or collectively, present their projects within the period and in the manner established in the conditions of entry. These may be consulted on the ONCE website -<http://www.once.es/R+D>- or may be requested from the Awards Secretariat. The projects may be presented in either Spanish or English.

Those projects presented by members of research centres must be authorised by the corresponding authorities. The projects that finally receive the awards, in accordance with the demands or requirements of the selection Committee, must be completed within six months of the date on which they are awarded the aid package.

Projects for this edition must be presented to the Secretariat of the ONCE International Research and Development Aid Awards before January 1st 2002. The Selection Committee shall announce the contest results in the first half of 2002.

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