

You are invited to attend the

School of Physical Therapy Lectureship Series

Unwrapping the Mummy: Physical Therapies and Managing Patient Wellbeing in Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia

When: Wednesday, October 16, 2024

6:00-7:00 p.m.

Where: Room 3120, Entrepreneurship & Innovation Building

Everyone Welcome!



Prosthetic toe, Ancient Egyptian mummy, British Museum



Robin Baker, CMG, FRHistS, FRAS, PhD

Professor Emeritus of Old Testament and Ancient Near Eastern Studies, University of Winchester
Fellow, University College London
Adjunct Research Professor, School of Physical Therapy,
Western University

Robin Baker is a specialist in the intellectual and cultural history of ancient Near Eastern civilizations. Two of those civilizations, Egypt and Mesopotamia, were the first in the world to define and classify disease and trauma and to develop systematic approaches to diagnosis and treatment. Their leading practitioners produced medical textbooks to train clinicians. Together with mummified human remains and illustrations of medical interventions on walls and monuments, these works, written in ancient Egyptian and Babylonian, give rich insights into ancient health science.

In this lecture, with particular reference to the neurorehabilitation, musculoskeletal, and cardiovascular-pulmonary practice areas, Robin will probe the ancient practice and theory of physical therapeutic intervention beginning from the earliest written records of four-five thousand years ago. This exploration will address questions about the ancient clinicians' understanding of disease and taxonomies of morbidity, and about the balance and relationship between rational and magical treatments. We will discover that although considerable epistemological and, of course, technological differences exist between physical therapy today and its earliest precursors, there is a surprising degree of commonality in philosophy, approach, and modes of treatment that link us with our earliest professional colleagues.