Albin Lambotte was born on July 3, 1866, in Brussels, Belgium — the youngest of 7 children. His father, a professor of comparative anatomy, died when Albin was 7 years old. Albin was greatly influenced by his older brother Elie Lambotte (1856-1912), a surgeon practicing in the Brussels suburb of Schaarbeek. Elie Lambotte did early work in fixation of tibial fractures with wires and screws around 1890, and Albin often assisted him, but then Elie became discouraged and did not pursue this approach further.

Albin studied medicine at Free University in Brussels (Université libre de Bruxelles). After graduating in 1891, he became an intern at Stuivenberg Hospital in Antwerp, where he later joined the permanent staff and spent the rest of his professional life.

He initially worked as a general surgeon, and in 1894 performed his first successful gastrectomy. By 1900 he had become the chief surgeon of the Antwerp hospital and performed high-risk spinal surgeries and craniotomies. He also treated osteoarticular tuberculosis with a complete resection of the involved bone. Increasingly, his practice focused on fracture treatment.

Lambotte was a skilled craftsman, draftsman, and wood carver. He spent a great deal of time experimenting in his workshop developing and producing his own bone fixation devices and instruments for fracture treatment, such as pins, plates, and clamps. He also made his own violin in his workshop and enjoyed playing it.

His first orthopedic internal fixation device, with a plate he produced himself, was used on a fractured tibia; however, it soon failed, due to corrosion. In 1902, he applied an external fixation device on another patient’s tibia, and also performed the first successful internal fixation of a broken femur.

Lambotte introduced the term "osteosynthesis" — fixation of bone, especially using mechanical devices — and published his collected experiences on the treatment of fractures by surgical methods in an influential book, L’ intervention Operatoire dans les Fractures Récentes et Anciennes ("Operative Intervention on Recent and Old Fractures"), which was published in 1907. A core component of Lambotte’s fracture treatment involved immediate mobilization and activity of muscles after surgery. A second, expanded edition of his book, La chirurgie operatoire des fractures ("Surgical operation of fractures") was published in 1913. In 1921, he established the Belgian Society for Orthopedic Surgery, and some of his techniques were widely adopted across Europe.

Albin Lambotte died on August 1, 1955, at the age of 90 in Antwerp. One day before his death, he said to his wife, "The greatest crime a man can commit against himself and humanity is to be inactive."

On June 12, 2017, Albin Lambotte was honored philatelically by Belgium (Scott # 2827).
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