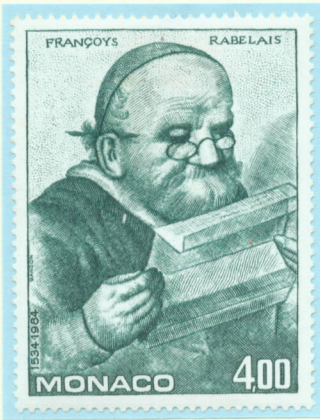


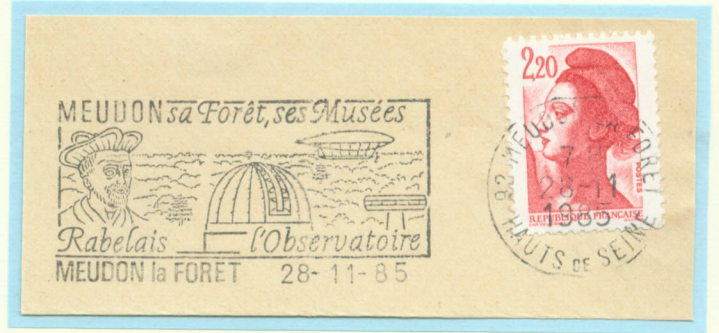
# 6. V.D. and the ARTS

## 6.1 LITERATURE

References to VD are found in Western literature from the Renaissance unto the present.



Francois Rabelais (1494?-1553) in Book II of his *PANTAGRUEL* tells of the syphilis of Pope Sixtus IV,



... and begins his *GARGANTUA*  
*Most illustrious Drinkers, and*  
*you most precious Syphilitics,*

... and continues in Chapter 14 with  
a tribute to Francis I of France:  
*And he died in the year 1420*  
*of syphilis which he had apenty.*



Miguel Cervantes (1547-1616) in *DON QUIXOTE*:

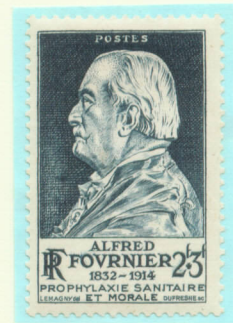
*Vergilius forgot to tell us who was the first man in the world to have a cold in the head or to take inunctions for the French disease.*



## 6.1 LITERATURE



Henrik Ibsen's play *GHOSTS*, written in 1881 and dedicated to Fournier, deals explicitly with syphilis.



Guy de Maupassant's novel *LE LIT 29* takes place in Rouen, France during the Franco-Prussian War. The heroine is raped by a Prussian soldier and infected with syphilis. She takes her revenge by infecting as many of the invading Prussians as possible. Her husband returns after the war to find her dying in the hospital in Rouen - in bed #29.



Perhaps de Maupassant was writing from experience - since he also was syphilitic!



Undated cancel/cachet unique to Rouen during Franco-Prussian War  
20 centimes postage due since Alsace-Lorraine occupation stamps not recognized

The fundamental theme in *Doctor Faustus* by Thomas Mann is syphilis - which he studied in the affected Nietzsche!

Although James Joyce suffered from gonorrhoea, the major theme in *Ulysses* is syphilis.

Syphilis is a common theme in several works by the French authors Barbey d'Aurevilly and Andre Gide



## 6.1 LITERATURE

By Shakespeare's time, syphilis had become common in Europe.  
The subject was ready for him and he made the most of it.

### HENRY V

Henry (II,i) *...pow'dring tub of infamy...*  
i.e., mercury baths for syphilis.  
Henry (V,i) *... of malady of France ...*  
i.e., the French pox or syphilis.

Normal Paper



Phosfor Paper



### A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

Quince (I,ii) *...French crowns which  
have no hair at all...*,  
i.e., syphilitic alopecia or baldness.



### HAMLET



Hamlet (V,i) in the exchange  
with the gravedigger,  
*...we have many pocky corpses nowadays...*  
i.e., many syphilitic corpses.

Visit Shakespeare's town and hear Falstaff in II Henry IV, I,ii -



*... A man can no more separate age and coventousness tha 'a can  
part young limbs and lechery. ... and the pox pinches the other.  
... A pox on this gout! Or a gout on this pox!*

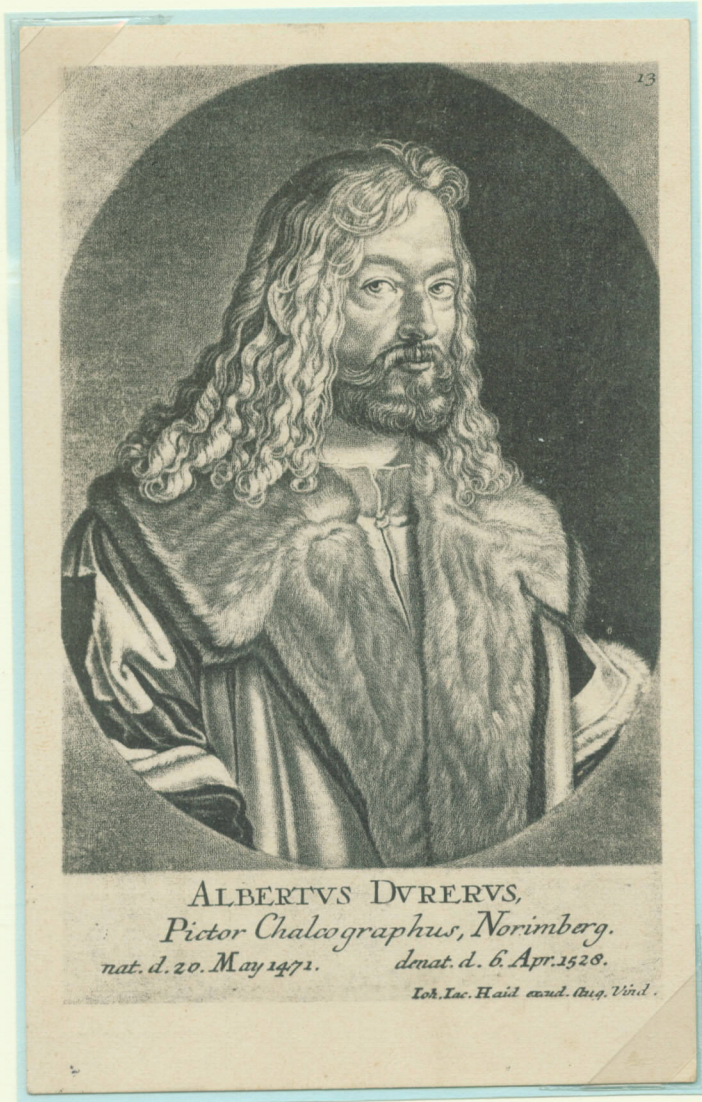


1' Local Stamp provided carriage from mail box at Holy Trinity Church & paid for 1 penny postage.  
28 August 1907 Stratford on Avon Service in use 1899-1908.

## 6.2 GRAPHIC ARTS

Visual works depicting VD, outside of medical texts, are scarce. However ...

Albrecht Durer's woodcut *The Syphilitic* (ca. 1524) illustrated the first printed article on the disease, a broadsheet by Diedrich Ulsen, town physician of Nurnberg.



Copy of Indicia for PTPO Postal Card

Ulrich von Hutten's drawings & writings accurately document his own case of syphilis.



Diego Rivera's mural on the 3rd floor of the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City shows unmistakable spirochetes and gonococci.



This 1950's exploitation film, that had the same name as Upton Sinclair's English translation of Eugene Brieux's 1910 play LES AVARIES, one of the first plays to deal explicitly with venereal disease, sought to both educate and titilate.

**WHAT  
HAPPENS  
TO OUR KIDS  
WHEN THEY  
GO 'ON THE  
TOWN'?**

The night is young, the road is smooth, the tank is full...

Youth is at the wheel and untold adventure lies ahead...

And so does the evil that people don't talk about...much!

Here comes a picture that does...frankly, openly, honestly!

It doesn't preach...but it doesn't pull its punches, either!

**DAMAGED  
GOODS**

Shouts the whole truth about those whispered half-truths!

IN  
COLOR



Introducing Hollywood's most exciting starlet **DOLORES FAITH** —You read about her in **LIFE** Magazine  
Produced by SID DAVIS • Written and Directed by HAILE CHACE • A Donna Production • An MY Films Release

Generic ad copy from press release kit. Note penciled comment: *NO ONE UNDER 17*

T H E A T R E

*NO ONE UNDER 17*

### 6.3 OPERA

Musical references to V.D. are quite unusual. However...

Alban Berg's unfinished opera *Lulu* features the sad syphilitic Lulu, her infected husband Alwa,



and her lesbian lover, Countess Geschwitz.

Igor Stravinsky's *The Rake's Progress* contains numerous subtle references to syphilis, especially in the brothel scene with the Whores and the Roaring Boys.



Pangloss, in Bernstein's *Candide*, based on Voltaire's text, suffers from the ravages of syphilis.



*Dear boy, you will not hear me speak  
With sorrow or with rancor  
Of what has shrivelled up my cheek  
And blasted it with canker;*

- Pangloss to Candide

The sexual and sinful nature of the unhealing wound suffered by Amfortas in Wagner's *Parsifal* and its relation to syphilis, the scourge of God, was obvious to any mid-nineteenth century opera lover.



25pfg + 15pfg Double Foreign Letter Rate

The evasion and embarrassment Gurnemanz betrays when questioned about Amfortas's wound and its source are typical of the silence and shame surrounding venereal diseases right through to the middle of the twentieth century.

## 6.4 POPULAR MUSIC

Venerable disease has rarely been a favorite topic for popular music. However, ...

... in the 1940's, Woody Guthrie sang such tunes as -  
 VD Blues, VD Gunner's Blues, VD Seaman's Last Letter, and the VD Waltz.



**Folk Musicians**  
 Legends of American Music  
 "Leadbelly" Ledbetter    Josh White  
 Sonny Terry    Woody Guthrie



FIRST DAY OF ISSUE

EdKen Cachet

... and in the 1960's, Wolfman  
 Jack sang FREE SHOTS for  
 CAVDA Records.

CAVDA - Citizens  
 Alliance for VD  
 Awareness.



For those  
 viewers not  
 over 40, this is  
 a 45 rpm record.  
 This is how we  
 once listened to music

Approx. 4 min. of music per side.