

A Verse-Scrap on a *kylix* by Epiktetos

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SUMMARY: The tondo scene on a *kylix* by Epiktetos in the J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu (Malibu 86.AE.279 *ex Bareiss*), portrays a balding, bearded, satyr-like symposiast reclining on a *kline*. Head thrown back in song, he is accompanying himself on the *barbitos*. A *dipinto* inscription, which has been thought nonsense or a misspelled *epoiesen*, travels an arc from the singer's head. Iconography and several possibilities for a sensible, if elliptical, reading lead Anderson to argue that the *dipinto* inscription may be a scrap of verse; it seems to preserve the earliest example of the Dionysiac shout εὐοῖ.

THE TONDO SCENE ON A RED-FIGURE *KYLIX* by Epiktetos in the J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu (fig. 1),¹ portrays a balding, bearded symposiast reclining on a *kline*, partially covered by his *himation*. Head thrown back in song, he is accompanying himself on the *barbitos*. A *dipinto* inscription, which Immerwahr labeled “a possible nonsense inscription, unless the letters are an imitation *epoiesen*,”² travels an arc from the singer's head. I shall argue that the *dipinto* inscription is not entirely nonsensical, and may in fact preserve the earliest example of the Dionysiac ejaculation εὐοῖ. In addition, the inscription may be a verse-scrap, a snatch of poetry, intended perhaps as a title recording the first words of a song.³ If I prove correct, the inscription and the

¹ Malibu 86.AE.279 (*ex Bareiss*); Beazley 1971 (hereafter *Para*) 329.83 *ter*; Burn (hereafter *Add²*) 168; Moore *CVA* 13, plate 398. Previously published in Wittman 43 and 78, plates 29 and 145. Image (not of sufficient quality to read more than the first three letters of the inscription; see below) and brief description in Wittman; more detailed description in Moore *CVA* (where, however, the photo appears to be the same used in Wittman, although of slightly better print quality).

² Immerwahr 1990: 62 (Cat. No. 350).

³ These are purposes suggested for other verse-scrap inscriptions by Immerwahr 1965: 153.

scene in which it is placed join a group of approximately fourteen others from the late Archaic and early Classical periods, most recently discussed by Csapo and Miller in 1991, that preserve not only the manner of performance of sympotic poetry in the Archaic period—through the image—but also a portion of the poetry sung.⁴

ICONOGRAPHY AND EPIGRAPHY

Epiktetos, to whom this *kylix* was attributed by Deppert,⁵ was a potter and painter whose *floruit* is placed about 520–490 B.C.E. This drinking cup is generally placed circa 510 B.C.E., at the end of his early period.⁶ Epiktetos signed his name as painter frequently with the conventional *egraphsen* (or *egrasphen*⁷), and his inscriptions are mostly of this sort, in addition to *epoiesen*, which may designate the potter, or perhaps the “workshop” in its broadest sense; there are also *kalos* names, which seem to designate an object of desire, or at least admiration. His later drinking cups show name inscriptions without *kalos*. There are no other long inscriptions associated with Epiktetos, unless we consider the inscription on the tondo of London E35 (Beazley 1963 [henceforth ARV²] 74.38),⁸ which does not readily yield sense. The relative paucity of long inscriptions for Epiktetos, although no painter can really be considered to have many, requires that each be taken on its own merits.

The inscription reads left to right EYOIEOΞEE. In the exhibition catalogue for the Bareiss vases, although the plate scarcely preserves the first few letters

⁴ Csapo and Miller. Anderson lists additional possibilities. For a few examples of verse-scrapings that have been paralleled with extant poetry see (square brackets contain first attribution, as far as can be determined): Paris, Musée du Louvre G30 (ARV² 15.9, 1619) (B) MAMEKAΠOTEO, Immerwahr 1990: 63, Cat. No. 363, cf. Sappho fr. 36 Lobel-Page [Studniczka, *JdI* 2 (1887) 162]; Munich, Antikensammlungen 2646 (ARV² 437.128, 1653) (I) OYΔYNAMOY, Immerwahr 1990: 87, Cat. No. 532, cf. Theognis 695 [Schulze, review of P. Kretschmer, *Die griechischen Vaseninschriften ihrer Sprache nach untersucht in Göttingische gelehrte Anzeigen* 158 (1896) 252] or Theognis 939 [Hartwig, *Die griechischen Meisterschalen* (Stuttgart 1893) 258]; London, British Museum 95.10–27.2 OΔIATHΣΘYPIΔOΣ, cf. Praxilla 8 Page [Wilamowitz, in P. Jacobstahl, *Göttinger Vasen* (Berlin 1912) 63, n. 1]; Athens, National Museum 1357 (unattributed, Rhomaïos CVA, Athens 1 [Greece 1], III Ic, pl. 3[25]; 1) (I) OΠAIΔONKAAΛIΣTE, cf. Theognis 1365 [Herzog, *Die Umschrift der älteren griechischen Literatur in das ionische Alphabet* (Basel 1912) 17].

⁵ Moore CVA 13; also cited in *Para* 329.83 *ter*.

⁶ Moore CVA 13.

⁷ The transposition of consonants, e.g., writing *egrasphen* instead of *egraphsen*, is a common one in this period; see Threatte 1980a: 20 1.011.

⁸ For this inscription see Immerwahr 1990: 62 (Cat. No. 346).

of the inscription, the inscription is given as EYOIEOΞEN.⁹ Immerwahr also read a *nu*, as did Beazley. But Moore in the CVA reads EYOIEOΞEΞ, and Immerwahr now concurs.¹⁰ The last letter is in fact difficult, first because published photographs usually do not show it clearly, and second because it is oddly placed on the curve of the tondo border. Immerwahr assures me (pers. comm.) on the basis of a color photograph taken by Kilmer, that the final letter is “either a reverse *nu* (S2) or a sideways *sigma* (S5), which latter is rather common in this period.” My inclination, then, is to read a *sigma*.

This inscription has been thought a misspelled *epoiesen* with some justification. Some of the letters and their sequence are similar (EΠOIEΞEN : E_OIE_ΞE_), especially given that earlier readings had the final letter as a *nu*, and the inscription has only one more letter than an *epoiesen*. In addition, the omission of the potter’s name in *epoiesen* inscriptions is not unusual for Epiktetos. But if the inscription on the *kylix* in Malibu were a misspelled *epoiesen*, it would involve two mistakes not to my knowledge seen in other misspellings of *epoiesen*: the addition of an O before the Ξ and the substitution of Y for Π (vowel for consonant). Indeed, there are very few misspellings of *epoiesen* on vessels by Epiktetos, and none with these mistakes.¹¹

The possibility remains, however, that this is a nonsense inscription, perhaps playing with the conventions of the *epoiesen* signature. Epiktetos does write nonsense: London E35 (ARV² 74.38) has on the interior an inscription over an image of a young warrior with his horse, EAONTOAOEY; Naples, Racc. Porn. 1 (ARV² 77.85), and Oviato, Museo Civico, Faina 148 (ARV² 77.89) both have nonsense variously in the field playing with E and OI. But this does not exclude the possibility of sense or partial sense in other inscriptions.¹²

⁹ Wittman 43, no. 29 (ill.) gives EYOIEOΞEN with the comment “(misspelled *epoiesen*)” but 78, no. 145 (ill.) gives EYOIEOΞEN (sub-dot under N).

¹⁰ Moore CVA 13, no. 7, pl. 398. Immerwahr, pers. comm.

¹¹ Athens, National Museum Ak. 68 (ARV² 75.62) has EΠOI (“but doubtful if the second letter is a *pi*, more like a *nu*” Beazley, loc. cit.). Vatican, Museo Gregoriano Etrusco 506 (ARV² 73.27), has EΠOE[.]EΞEN on (A), but EΠOIEΞEN on (B) and (I). The composition of the scene on Side A involves two groups of people and horses: Athena and Herakles (between whom the letters EΠOI stand, retrograde) are on the left; the remainder of the letters are spread out between Herakles and the mortals who occupy the right side of the scene (the cup appears to be damaged on the right hand side, making it difficult to know exactly what was written). Immerwahr points out in addition Tarquinia, Museo Nazionale RC 1091 (ARV² 76.65), which has in the tondo EΠOIEΞ written on a wineskin carried by a satyr, and EΠOIEΞENOX in the field.

¹² Nonsense inscriptions are “often used by vase painters who could write perfectly well, sometimes even on vases that also bear sense inscriptions.” Immerwahr 1992: 52.

Euphronios and Euthymides in particular, who are well known for remarkable long inscriptions and who were contemporaries of Epiktetos, also use nonsense, sometimes a long string of letters,¹³ but often one or two letters here or there in the scene.¹⁴ While Immerwahr warns against attempts to give meaning to these isolated words in general, he admits that there may be exceptions.¹⁵ One might reasonably argue that the nonsense label should only be applied after the possibilities of sense are ruled out. I shall proceed on the assumption, then, that the *dipinto* in the Malibu *kylix* makes sense. In fact, the letters provide several recognizable readings which offer plausible, if somewhat elliptical, interpretations.

I suggested above that this inscription preserves the shout εὐοῖ and may be a snatch of verse. The iconography supports strongly this. There are two observations to be made. First, the figure in the tondo scene is singing, and it seems that the painter intended the figure to seem to be singing the inscription. Our symposiast adopts the standard pose for singing, i.e., head thrown back and mouth open. For singers without instrument, it was conventional also to have the right arm draped up and around the head, but lyre and *barbitos* players (for obvious reason) are regularly shown only with head back. The placement of the inscription along the tondo border is a preferred one for Epiktetos, but it seems clear that the inscription might be considered as the song: the letters on our tondo scene emerge from the close vicinity of the singer's mouth, as they do in most examples of the sung verse-scrap, and also spoken dialogue, continuing in the direction the vocalizer is facing.¹⁶ Here, since the vocalizer faces to the right, the letters emerge orthograde.

The second observation, that the singer has close iconographic affinities with Epiktetos' satyrs, is a subtlety that becomes clear when the face of the singer is compared with Epiktetos' human faces and his satyr faces (I provide a representative example of each in fig. 3, for which there are many fine parallels). Our singer's face is a hybrid of the two, with human ears, but a satyr nose and a satyr's full beard. Many of Epiktetos' satyrs are also bald in the same way as this man. It is well known that satyrs are closely associated with Dionysos by the time of Epiktetos on Archaic red-figure pottery, and Carpen-

¹³ See for example, Euthymides' Munich 2308 (ARV² 26.2) XYXOΞIII, Louvre G 44 (ARV² 27.3) XAPXΣ, Munich 2309 (ARV² 27.4) EΙΔΟΝΘ[E]MEN; Euphronios' Arezzo 1465 (ARV² 15.6; see Furtwangler et al., 2.7–8) with Epiktetos' London E35 (ARV² 74.38) EANTO[Λ or Y]OE[Λ or Y].

¹⁴ See for example Euthymides' Malibu 84.AE.63 (ΦΑΥΛΟΣ ΛΟ; see Immerwahr 1992: n. 43) and Epiktetos' Tarquinia RC 1091 (ARV² 76.65) ΕΠΟΙΕΣΕΝΟΧ.

¹⁵ Immerwahr 1992: 53.

¹⁶ A striking exception to this rule is the inscription on Erlangen 454 (ARV² 339.49).

ter notes that Epiktetos advanced considerably the psychological substitution of satyr for man on red-figure¹⁷; in a recent paper delivered in Princeton (11/22/03) he argued for deliberate, parallel association of satyr and symposiast on cups by Epiktetos.¹⁸ François Lissarague, too, suggests a number of ways in which the satyr in this period assumes human characteristics (while remaining “wild”).¹⁹ Epiktetos seems to be playing with the assimilation of human to satyr.

All this lends iconographic support to a fundamental division of letters also implied in the image itself: EYOI EOΣ EZ. This division of the letters may seem arbitrary. For example, why not separate EY from the rest of the letters, leaving a miswritten verb of some sort? Although letter placement cannot always be used to justify word division, I think it is apparent here that the painter has made some effort to include the iota with the first three letters, tucking it in under the cross-bar of the *barbitos* (see fig. 2); from a compositional viewpoint, then, the first four letters seem intended to be taken together. Beazley did not note the iota,²⁰ but the others do; it is quite certainly there. It is not a spall (*cf.* the small spall immediately to the left of the *iota*), and has the same coloring as the rest of the lettering—the usual applied red—rather than the lighter color of unslipped clay. Kilmer, who took the photo and who has handled the drinking cup, confirms the *iota*.²¹ I suggest these letters form the first word of the utterance, εὐοῖ, the bacchic shout. Not inappropriate, perhaps, in the context of the performance of sympotic poetry, which probably also included re-performance of material from other contexts, the use of this exclamation is further reinforced in the scene by the satyr-like appearance of the singer, as I suggested above. But is this particular ejaculation appropriate for our satyr-like singer?

There are several references in Old Comedy to the singing at *symposia* of poems composed for different contexts or occasions. Ar. V. 1222–40 has a lengthy scene, involving verses of the Harmodios song (*cf.* Ath. 15.694C–

¹⁷ Carpenter (*pers. comm.*), who is currently working on this interesting question. For a full discussion of the links, which begin in Attic black-figure, between satyrs/silenoï and Dionysos see Carpenter 76–97.

¹⁸ Carpenter has kindly allowed me to read a text of the paper as delivered.

¹⁹ Lissarague; on 210–12 he notes in particular the use of clothing (*himation*).

²⁰ Beazley, *Para* 329.83 *ter*. It is not clear whether or not Immerwahr 1990: 62 does when he states that this may be an imitation *epoiesen* (e.g., *epoieosen* = *epoiesen*), but in either case the second letter is definitely not a *pi*.

²¹ Kilmer (*pers. comm.*). The piece was assembled from three fragments (Moore CVA 13), and the plaster painted, but none of the breaks seems to have been in the vicinity of the inscription.

695B), Alkaïos, Praxilla,²² and unknown lyric, in which Bdelykleon is attempting to teach his father Philokleon how to take part in “capping.”²³ Likewise Ar. fr. 235 Kassel-Austin (henceforth K-A), from the *Daitales*, mentions Alkaïos and Anakreon²⁴; see also the *scholium* on Ar. Nu. 1364 (Dübner) where Stesichorus and Simonides are mentioned. Especially interesting in this regard is Ar. Nu. 1353–79, which mentions μέλοι and tragic lyric: Strepsiades has requested that his son Pheidippides perform something of Simonides; Pheidippides scornfully refuses (judging from his response, singing at *symposia* has fallen out of fashion with the younger set); instead of a song (μέλος) Strepsiades asks his son to perform some Aischylos; Pheidippides compromises by offering some Euripides. Note here that the custom seems to belong to the older generation, placing it closer (in dramatic time at any rate) to the period when Epiktetos was painting.

Songs of various types then, including selections of tragedy, were performed at some *symposia*. But is the bacchic shout εὐοῖ found in any of these literary contexts? In fact, we do have examples of εὐοῖ in comic and tragic lyric,²⁵ as well as εὐᾶν and ἰώ, two other common shouts associated with Dionysos. But it may simply be enough to note that the utterance seems to have been used regularly in association explicitly with Dionysos or implicitly with the type of activities common in bacchic contexts. At Dem. 18.260, although a late example, Demosthenes rebukes Aeschines for his loose living, including crying εὐοῖ σαβοῖ. If our curiously satyr-like symposiast exclaims εὐοῖ, he is hardly alone.²⁶ Iconographical and epigraphical considerations, then, support a reading of εὐοῖ for part of the inscription, making this the earliest preserved instance of the word.

The rest of the inscription is somewhat more difficult to interpret. We might understand the next three letters, ΕΟΣ, to form a second word. A smooth

²² Ar. V. 1234–35 = Alkaïos (fr. 141 Campbell); 1238 = Praxilla (fr. 3).

²³ “Capping” was a type of agonistic game in which one person finished a verse begun by another, or attempted to outdo the other; see Barker 43 and *h. Merc.* 55–56, Thgn. 993–96, Ar. *Lys.* 1236–38, and Theoc. 5.80–137.

²⁴ Ar. fr. 235 K-A ῥῖσον δὴ μοι σκόλιόν τι λάβων Ἀλκαίου κᾶνακρέοντος.

²⁵ S. *Tr.* 219, E. *Tr.* 326, Ar. *Ec.* 1181, *Lys.* 1294, *Th.* 993.

²⁶ One might adduce as a parallel an inscription on a fragmentary krater in the National Museum, Copenhagen (inv. 13365), which preserves an Anacreontic komast (he wears the sakkos, earrings, and a garland and carries a parasol) who—head thrown back—sings IOOO. Immerwahr (1965: 152 where he refers us to Pöhlmann 84, nos. l and m) suggests that this is a conventional representation of sound, but it too is a common (sometimes Bacchic) exclamation also found in lyric poetry; see, e.g., E. *Ba.* 578. For ἰώ ὦ ὦ see S. *OC* 224.

breathing might be understood, that is, Ἡώς, or we might read Ἡώς with the usual rough breathing marker *heta* omitted. Epiktetos does include the H = [h] in some proper names, but sporadic omission of H = [h] is not rare in Attic script,²⁷ and there are examples in the inscriptions of painters contemporary, or very near contemporary, with Epiktetos. Dawn (*Eos*) is seen occasionally in archaic poetry, usually accompanied by the epithet ῥοδοδάκτυλος in dactylic meters, often appearing at the end of a line.²⁸ But Dawn is also seen in other types of poetry in different line positions; it may be Dawn in the nominative here.²⁹ EOΣ may also represent the contracted form of the genitive singular ἡοῦς, which can mean “at dawn,” or “in the early morning,” as well as having a possessive force.³⁰ O for the spurious diphthong OY is standard in this period on drinking cups and in other, more formal, Attic inscriptions on stone.³¹ Alternately, EOΣ might represent ἕως “until.” Interpretations of the last two letters, if they are ΕΣ, are even more speculative, including the preposition εἰς (ἐς), or the Doric 2nd person singular imperfect active or present subjunctive of εἰμί, ἦς. The latter is particularly appealing, if only because the other examples of verse-scrap on drinking cups are not so elliptical as a preposition without object.

I suggested above that the satyr-like appearance of the singer helps secure the reading εὐοῖ, most often seen in dramatic lyric contexts, including Attic tragedy. If we choose to look for sense for the last five letters of the inscription (and I am inclined to), sense may be readily found. The use of εὐοῖ in lyric admits the possibility of the Doric dialect, in which case an attractive reading might be: εὐοῖ · ἡοῦς ἦς “Euoi! At dawn you were ...”. Less likely, but still possible, is εὐοῖ · ἕως ἦς “Euoi! As long as you were...”. *Theognidea* 1327–28 is a possible parallel: ὦ παῖ, ἕως ἔχης λείαν γένυν, οὔποτε σαίνων / παύσομαι, οὐδ’ εἴ μοι μόρσιμόν ἐστι θανεῖν, “Boy, as long as your cheek is hairless, I’ll never stop kissing you, not even if it means death for me.” Obviously, the thought these words begin may be completed freely—indeed, in a

²⁷ See the discussion in Threatch 1980a: 493–506 42.01.

²⁸ E.g., Mimm. 12.3, 10; see also Ibyc. 289; Sapph. 103.13, 104(a)1, 123, 157; (archaizing) *Anacreontea* 55.20 West.

²⁹ All of the verse-scrap on other drinking cups that have a direct parallel in surviving poetry match the first words of the poem in question (or in one case, perhaps the first words of a line in the poem). By analogy I would suggest that if this is a verse-scrap it also preserves the first words of a poem.

³⁰ For reference to morning see Thgn. 997; Page fr. 745, 985(b); *Anacreontea* fr. 37(35b) West, 1–6; Asclep. fr. 14, 35 Page.

³¹ See Threatch 1980a: 350–51 21.011 for O = OU.

number of meters.³² And the final five letters in particular do allow a number of possible readings. What's more, these readings can be shown to convey sense and grammar, if somewhat elliptical (as these inscriptions often are, see n. 4). The satyr-like appearance of the singer may anticipate the appearance of εὐοῖ more often in later dramatic lyric contexts (and the passage from Aristophanes' *Clouds* cited above confirms that dramatic lyric might be re-performed at *symposia*; see n. 22)³³; it surely brings to mind Dionysiac associations.

But it is the appearance of εὐοῖ here that is most striking, since εὐοῖ is not seen in extant sympotic poetry, or indeed in poetry of any type until Aristophanes. Εὐῶν, another Dionysiac ejaculation, is cited from Pindar by Heliodorus, although the context is lost. But I hope I have shown that, despite the fact that it is unattested in what little is left of Archaic poetry, εὐοῖ is here on a drinking cup dated circa 510 B.C.E., part of a verse-scrap inscription in a representation of the performance of sympotic poetry. This verse-scrap should not, then, be called a nonsense inscription, but might find a better place among the other verse-scrap inscriptions found on Archaic and early Classical figured pottery.

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³² No certain comment can be made concerning the meter, since we lack metrical context due to the brevity of the inscription, although we might safely say that εὐοῖ is *extra metrum*. It could be a lyric meter, a supposition bolstered by the depiction of a *barbitos* as accompaniment—he is playing it—not as accoutrement (a glyconic perhaps, or a pherecratean); or if the accompanying instrument for certain genres was not as canonical as some suppose, it may be the beginning of an elegiac. But I suspect a lyric meter.

³³ Cf. Ar. *Lys.* 1294, *Th.* 993, *Ec.* 1181.

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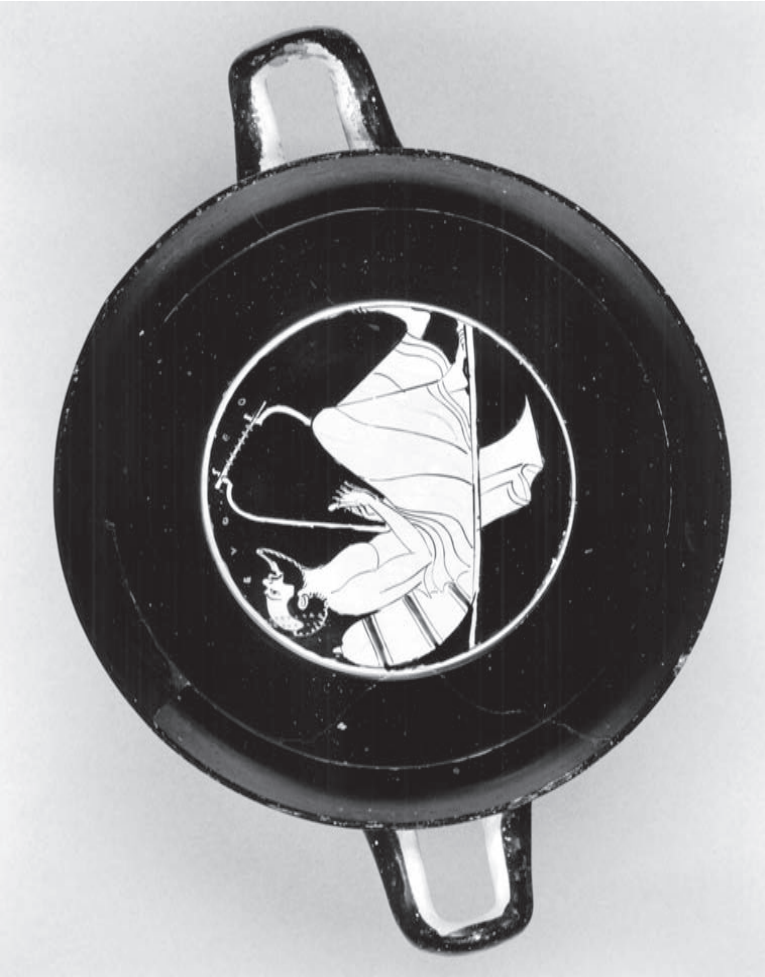


Fig. 1. Attic Red-Figure Cup, Epiktetos, 86.AE.279 (tondo). The J. Paul Getty Museum, Villa Collection, Malibu, California © The J. Paul Getty Museum.



Fig. 2. Malibu 86.AE.279 detail



Fig. 3. (*left side*) Attic Red-Figure kylix, Epiktetos, JHU AIAB3 (tondo, detail). The Johns Hopkins Archaeological Collection, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Maryland.

(*right side*) Red-Figure kylix (Palmette Eye-Cup), Epiktetos/Pamphaios 67.61 (side A, detail). Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin College, Ohio; General Acquisitions Fund, 1967.

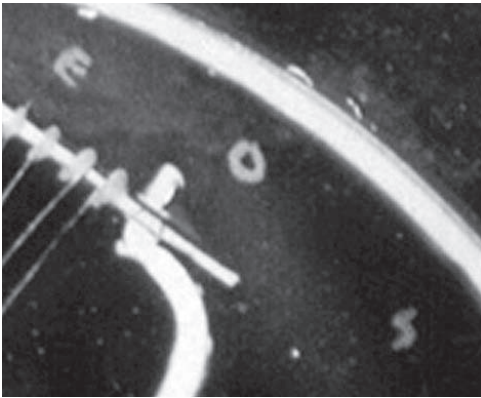


Fig. 4. Malibu 86.AE.279 detail



Fig. 5. Malibu 86.AE.279 detail