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REPORT
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On December 20, 2021, Graham Arader asked me for my written opinion on the identity and authenticity of a Philadelphia side chair, furniture inventory number 11. This report summarizes my observations and opinions.

Side chair

Philadelphia, 1755-75

Walnut

41-1/2 x 23 x 20-3/4

“((((” is chiseled into the inside of the rear rail.

This strapwork-splat side chair exhibits three features that distinguish it from most Philadelphia strapwork splat chairs and align it with a small group chairs and case furniture once associated with John Elliott (see also side chair Arader inventory number 33). The first feature is the ruffled mantle carving on the knee brackets that runs along the outside S-curved edge. A deep score line creates a wide bead along the outside edge and separates it from the ruffle. A second feature lies in the deep drop in the center of the front rail that falls below the bottom line of intersection between the rails and the front legs. Because of the shape of the board used to make the front rail, this deep drop requires lamination of additional wood. (For a side chair at Winterthur, acc. no. 1961.1526, with related front rail and ruffled-mantle carving, see Joseph Downs, *American Furniture: Queen Anne and Chippendale*, no. 122; and John T. Kirk, *American Chairs: Queen Anne and Chippendale*, no. 62.) The third feature is the splat design. It is readily recognizable as a common strapwork design, but it is a distinctive version. Notably, the bottom-most piercing is a pie-shaped opening that has no counterpart in the usual design. Other differences exist in the relative placements and some eccentricities of the several straps. All considered, it presents a distinctive variant.

Other lesser parallels lie in the absence of through tenons in the rear stiles (also absent on the Winterthur chair), the lack of molding along the top edge of the seat rails, and the tool used to number the chair within its original set. A curved chisel stamped five times into the inside of the

rear rail identifies this chair as number five in its set. The related number 33 chair is marked in the same location with a curved chisel, instead of a ubiquitous straight chisel.

The chair experienced damage and was repaired. Both rear stiles are repaired where the side rails tenon into them. The back of the shoe is repaired where the base of the splat fits into it. The crest rail has been replaced in its entirety and displays carved details that have no close corollaries in pre-Revolutionary Philadelphia chairs. The corner blocks inside the seat frame are replacements, as is the slip seat.