

# Abraham Hondius

Rotterdam 1625 - 1695 London

## *Still Life with a Hound and a Hare*

Oil on panel

78 x 51 cm (30 3/4 by 20 in.)

Signed: A. Hondius

*Provenance:*

Private Collection, Aachen

The name of Abraham Hondius is certainly known in Holland, but it was in England, where he settled in 1666, that he encountered real fame<sup>1</sup>.

The earliest known, though rarely cited biography is contained in the notebooks of George Vertue (1648-1756): *Abraham Hondius was born Rotterdam in ye year 1638. He was a Painter whose manner was universal. He drew History, Landskip, Cielings, and small figures; but above all the rest Beasts & Hunting Pieces; were his principal Study...*

*The Dogs & Huntings he drew are in good request, tho some of his Latter performances are careless, he being for many years afflicted with the Gout severely, that he had prodigious*

*Swellings and Chalk stones in most of his Joints. The effect of Sedentary & irregular Life. This Distemper occasion'd his Death in London, about the year 1691*<sup>2</sup>.

Most of Hondius' history paintings and allegorical scenes date from his Dutch period<sup>3</sup>; it was only in England that he emerged as a painter of hunting and animal pieces. They were clearly inspired by the work of Flemish artists like Frans Snyders, Paul de Vos and Jan Fyt. Vertue mentions this similarity specifically in connection with a painting in the collection of a Mr. Rawlinson: *a large picture, bear bating by Hondius, much like Snyders*<sup>4</sup>.

There is no question that Hondius saw works by his Flemish colleagues, for there were large numbers of them both in Holland and England. Laurens J. Bol also believes that Hondius was influenced by the painter Juriaen Jacobsz., who worked in Rotterdam but had studied with Frans Snyders in Antwerp<sup>5</sup>.

The English have been and remain devoted to the noble sport of hunting. In painting this led to the development of a true genre, the 'sporting painting', which enjoyed its first heyday in the 17th century, with Abraham Hondius regarded as one of its first practitioners.

- 1) The best, although by no means complete survey of the life and work of Abraham Hondius is by Alfred Hentzen, *Abraham Hondius* in *Jahrbuch der Hamburger Kunstsammlungen*, no. 8, 1963, pp. 35-56
- 2) Reprinted in *WALPOLE SOCIETY*, no. 20, 1931-32, p. 123
- 3) See: Petra ten Doesschate-Chu in: *Im Lichte Hollands: Holländische Malerei des 17. Jahrhunderts aus den Sammlungen des Fürsten von Liechtenstein und aus Schweizer Besitz*, Basel 1987, p. 142
- 4) *WALPOLE SOCIETY*, no. 24, 1935-36, p.
- 5) Bol (1969), pp. 254-256



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