

Visible and invisible: Jacques Stella in Melbourne

by JAYNIE ANDERSON

ONE OF THE largest Baroque paintings in Australia has hung in St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne, since the middle of the nineteenth century when the first Catholic Archbishop of Melbourne, James Alipius Goold OSA (1812–86), bought it for his Neo-gothic cathedral, designed by the English-born Catholic architect William Wardell. The altarpiece has been seen by millions of worshippers, but has never previously been photographed, nor discussed in art-historical literature. Jacques Stella's *Jesus in the Temple found by his parents* (Fig.2) is a painting of great quality, whose provenance, revealed here for the first time, suggests that it is the original altarpiece commissioned by Sublet de Noyers for the Jesuit church of the Novitiate at Paris, consecrated in October 1642.

Archbishop Goold¹ was revealed to be a significant colonial collector of European Baroque art only in 2014 when some of his Piranesi prints, selected from all twenty-seven elephant folios of the first Paris edition now in the collection of the University of Melbourne, were exhibited at the State Library of Victoria, Melbourne.² In connection with the Piranesi exhibition, Professor Luigi Ficacci, then Soprintendente of Bologna, visited Australia, the first of a number of European experts consulted. He played a key role in the re-evaluation of Stella's altarpiece.³ Ficacci and the present author examined the archbishop's collection, both in the Cathedral and elsewhere, and realised that Goold's acquisitions had been seriously misjudged.

Goold's pictures had all been previously dismissed as copies. Indeed there are copies in his collection, but after masterpieces by Raphael, such as the *Transfiguration*, while others are late Baroque paintings of high quality. Goold, an Irishman, was educated in Augustinian seminaries in Italy between 1833 and 1837, where he acquired a taste for Italian Baroque painting and prints, which he later bought to decorate the first Catholic churches built in Melbourne. They were all of religious subjects, and he may have considered them unimportant aesthetically, but of the greatest importance in communicating Catholicism. Ironically, when he lent paintings to the great loan exhibition of European art held in Melbourne in 1869, Goold sent only copies after famous Italian artists, such as Raphael, keeping the Baroque pictures of quality in churches and in his own collection. A portrait bust shows Goold's taste in contemporary art (Fig.1), made in Rome in December 1859 by Achille Simonetti (1838–1900), a member of



1. Portrait bust of Archbishop James Alipius Goold, by Achille Simonetti. 1859. Carrara marble, 72 by 50 by 23 cm. (Melbourne Archdiocese Collection).

the Accademia di San Luca. Goold's uncle considered the sculpture the 'perfection of a likeness',⁴ and Simonetti later became the most fashionable portrait sculptor in Sydney.⁵

An indication of the art that Goold esteemed is provided by the two Italian paintings he gave to the National Gallery of Victoria in 1867, both of which were later de-accessioned by Daryl Lindsay in a notorious sale at the Gallery on 7th October 1941.⁶ One, a seventeenth-century *Martyrdom of St Sebastian*,

I thank His Grace the Archbishop of Melbourne, Denis J. Hart, for permission to publish the painting, and Rachel Naughton, Archivist and Museum Manager of the Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, for arranging photography and consultation in the archives of the Cathedral. I have gained much from discussions about the altarpiece with Pierre Curie, Vincent Delieuvin, Sylvain Laveissière, Nicolas Milanovic, Elisabeth Ravaut, Pierre Rosenberg and Carl Willis.

¹ The best account of Goold, upon which all others are based, is F. O'Kane: *A Path is Set. The Catholic Church in the Port Phillip District and Victoria 1839–1862*, Melbourne 1976, although his collection is not discussed.

² C. Holden: *Piranesi's Grandest Tour from Europe to Australia*, Sydney 2014, pp.161–66. See also *idem*: 'Archbishop Goold's first Paris edition of Piranesi's works', in K. Stone and G. Vaughan, eds.: *The Piranesi Effect*, Sydney 2015, pp.210–17; and S. Carmody: 'The Baroque Bishop: Piranesi in the collection of J. A. Goold', *ibid.*, pp.218–34.

³ Sylvain Laveissière told me that when he was preparing the Stella exhibition

catalogue for 2006–07, Henri Loyrette, then Director of the Musée du Louvre, saw Stella's altarpiece in St Patrick's Cathedral in 2004, and thought it should be investigated further. In 2013 Alain Chevalier, Director of the Musée de la Révolution française at Vizille, informed his colleague Laveissière of the Melbourne painting, but was unable to photograph it. I am deeply grateful to Sylvain Laveissière, who has generously read my article and has drawn attention to material that I would not have known otherwise.

⁴ As described by Goold's uncle, Bishop James Hynes, in a letter to Goold; Melbourne, Archive of the Melbourne Diocesan Commission, 22nd December 1859.

⁵ N.S. Hutchison: 'Simonetti, Achille (1838–1900)', *Australian Dictionary of Biography, National Centre of Biography*, <http://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/simonetti-achille-4580/text7521>, accessed 2nd July 2015.

⁶ Leonard Joel auction catalogue, 7th October 1941, copy in a folder at the National Gallery of Victoria, labelled NGV 1940's.

recently attributed to the circle of Orazio Riminaldi, has been traced to the gallery of the Benedictine Community at New Norcia, Western Australia.⁷ It was bought from the 1941 sale by the Spanish Benedictine Father Eugene Perez, who was briefly a student at the National Gallery art school in Melbourne, along with all the other de-accessioned religious works of considerable quality, including a magnificent cartoon, later recognised as the work of Giulio Romano for the *Head of an apostle* for the tapestry of *The descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost* in the Vatican. The drawing is now in Kalamburu.⁸

Goold was regarded as extravagant in his building programmes, for St Patrick's was the largest cathedral built in the nineteenth century, only rivalled in size and magnificence by St Patrick's Cathedral in New York. The archbishop was discreet about his acquisitions, and they were little discussed in his lifetime. A Neo-gothic French chalice and paten exemplifies Goold's taste in ecclesiastical furnishings made for his ordination, now in the Victorian and Albert Museum, London.⁹ Goold's ambitious building programme and collecting would have been impossible without the new wealth of the Gold Rush in the colonial state of Victoria and the resultant philanthropy.

Turning from the archbishop to the altarpiece he bought for his Cathedral, we find on the reverse of Stella's unlined seventeenth-century canvas two inscriptions and a Roman customs stamp. The first inscription, on the back of the canvas in a seventeenth-century hand, reads: 'No 138 *Jésus retrouvé dans le temple par Jacques Stella*' (Fig.3). The second inscription, also in a seventeenth-century hand along the lower frame reads: 'No 122 – *Jésus retrouvé dans le temple Jacques Stella*' (Fig.5). So far the inventories to which these inscriptions refer have not been found.

The imprint of the *Dogana di Roma*, showing that the altarpiece was exported from Rome, is on the mount on the reverse of the frame (Fig.4). High-resolution photography shows that the customs officer tried first to imprint the mark unsuccessfully, and was firmer the second time. The presence of the Roman customs stamp reveals that the Melbourne Stella is the version that was in the collection of Cardinal Joseph Fesch and was exported from Rome, where the heavy duty of 20 per cent was imposed on all pictures sold to foreign purchasers.¹⁰

Cardinal Joseph Fesch (1763–1839), Napoleon Bonaparte's uncle and his representative in Rome, had a highly individual taste in collecting.¹¹ He was born in Ajaccio, Corsica, and by

1796 was appointed commissaire of Napoleon's armies in Italy, when he was presented with many paintings in order to secure favour with the young general.¹² Fesch bought mostly religious art, especially Italian primitives and Baroque paintings. The Fesch collection was immense, larger than any museum at the time, and he constantly profited from his nephew's political activities, often buying large numbers of pictures in order to obtain a masterpiece. At the time of Napoleon's abdication, the Cardinal's house in rue de la Chaussée d'Antin, Paris, contained 1,600 paintings, some of which were sold in Paris on 17th June 1816. The greater part was removed illegally to Rome to occupy three palaces, where Fesch continued to collect until his death. Many works from his collection are now in French provincial museums.

Fesch died at Rome in 1839, after which the first known inventory of his collection was made by a group of Roman Academicians, including the Roman artist Vincenzo Camuccini,¹³ between 5th September and 12th December 1839.¹⁴ In the 1839 inventory, the Melbourne painting was catalogued as 'French', numbered 1801, located in the second anticamera of the Palazzo Falconeri and valued at 30 scudi: '*Quadro in tela alto piedi nove, largo piedi sei, e mezzo rappresentante Gesù trovato fra i dottori di scuola francese scudi trenta 30*'.¹⁵ The subject of *Jesus in the Temple found by his parents* was rare, and Camuccini mistook it for *Jesus disputing with the doctors in the Temple*, the previous episode in the gospel of St Luke.¹⁶ Some of the Fesch collection was inherited by Lucien Bonaparte, Prince of Canino, and some by Joseph Bonaparte, the Cardinal's legatee, who gave seven hundred paintings to form a gallery named after Fesch at Ajaccio, which fulfilled many of the educational aims Fesch had always intended for this collection.

In 1844, some five years after the Camuccini inventory, the painting was more fully described in the sale catalogue of the Fesch collection in Rome made by the French artist Charles George, with an attribution to Stella.¹⁷ George's lengthy entry is informative. He states that the painting came from the Noviciate Church in Paris and describes the rare subject based on Luke 2:49, when Jesus, standing before his parents who have come looking for him, raises his right hand and, pointing with his left at the holy book held by one of the doctors, declares 'I must be about my Father's business'. The subject was suitable for a Jesuit novitiate. In preparation for their entry into the Order, novices undertake a series of spiritual and practical exercises based on St

⁷ The other was a nineteenth-century Italian genre painting but it remains unidentified.

⁸ On the de-accessioning sales of the National Gallery of Victoria, see B.K. Thomas: 'Daryl Lindsay: a vision for Australian Art', unpublished Ph.D. diss. (University of Melbourne, 2008), pp.289–90. The drawing was attributed to 'School of Raphael' in the sale catalogue, but was recognised as a Giulio Romano decades later by Mauro Lucco. The drawing had been donated to the National Gallery of Victoria in 1889.

⁹ M.25–1983.

¹⁰ See the account of the sale of the Fesch collection in *The Spectator* (1st February 1845), p.19, where the art market and the circumstances of the auction are criticised.

¹¹ The biography by the abbé Lyonnet is very eulogistic: see *Le cardinal Fesch archevêque de Lyon, primat des Gaules* [...] *Fragments biographiques, politiques et religieux pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique contemporaine*, Lyon and Paris 1841.

¹² S. Vannini: 'Il cardinal Fesch e la sua Collezione', *Ville e Palazzi illusione scenica e miti archeologici*, Rome 1987, pp.302–13.

¹³ On the brothers Camuccini as artists and dealers, see J. Anderson: 'The provenance of Bellini's "Feast of the Gods" and a New/Old Interpretation', in J. Manca, ed.: *Titian '500*, Washington DC 1993, pp.265–71.

¹⁴ The inventory of the Fesch collection after his death is in Rome, Archivio di Stato, Archivio notarile, Capito II, Ufficio 11, *notarile* Augusto Appolloni, anno 1839, vol.611, fol.37r to 503v. Some 16,000 paintings were described, but the collection was said to have been much larger.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, fol.378v. Also available in transcription online at the Getty Provenance Index

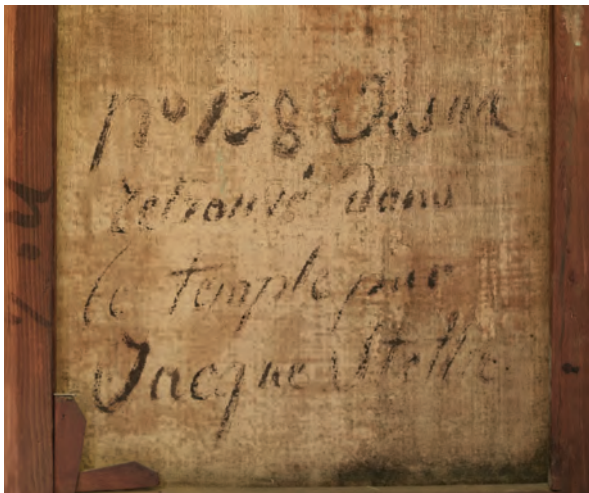
Database, Archival Inventory 1–1833, accessed 16th April 2015.

¹⁶ The rarity of the subject is demonstrated by the fact that in the Warburg Institute Iconographic Database there is only one example cited, *Mary and Joseph seek Christ*, a stained-glass window from the Frauenkirche, Munich, part of a cycle of the Infancy of Christ.

¹⁷ The description by George reads: '*Après trois jours d'inutiles recherches, Marie et Joseph viennent de rencontrer l'enfant-Dieu dans le temple, au milieu des docteurs. La Vierge adresse à son fils ce doux reproche: mon enfant, pourquoi avez-vous fait ainsi? Voici votre père et moi qui vous cherchons étant fort tristes. Jésus, debout devant elle, lève la main droite vers le ciel, et, montrant de la gauche le livre saint que tient un des docteurs, fait entendre sans doute ces paroles rapportées par l'Ecriture: ne savez-vous pas qu'il faut que je sois occupé de ce qui regarde mon père. Derrière eux, les docteurs, assis ou debout, compulsent les Ecritures. Marie, à demi-voilée, a un léger fichu sur le cou, et ses cheveux blonds relevés sont retenus par un ruban. Le Sauveur porte une robe rouge et un manteau bleu qui, passant sur le bras qu'il lève, se replie ensuite autour de son corps; sa tête est ombragée par de longs cheveux châtains qui tombent en boucles sur ses épaules. Son père adoptif, une main sur la poitrine, l'autre sur le bâton qui lui sert d'appui, se tient debout à côté de la Vierge, mais plus en avant de la composition. Deux anges planent dans le haut de temple dont l'architecture est de la plus grande magnificence. Ce tableau se trouvait autrefois au noviciat des Jésuites à Paris. T.H. 9 p.5p.–L.6p. 9p.*', in the *Catalogue abrégé de la précieuse galerie de tableaux des écoles italienne, flamande, hollandaise et française, de feu son éminence le Cardinal Fesch: dont la vente aux enchères publiques commencera le 25 mars 1844, au Palais de Cardinal, à Rome, Troisième Partie*, Paris 1844, pp.82–83.



2. *Jesus in the Temple found by his parents*, by Jacques Stella. 1642. Canvas, 302 by 219 cm. (Baptistry of St Patrick's Cathedral, Melbourne, Melbourne Archdiocese Collection).



3. Back of Fig. 2, showing an inscription on the canvas.

4. Back of Fig. 2, showing the stamp of the Dogana di Roma on the middle section of the mount.



5. Back of Fig. 2, showing an inscription on the mount of the frame.

Ignatius Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*, a thirty-day silent retreat.¹⁸ Goold brought the Jesuits to Melbourne in 1865, and may have realised the significance of the subject of Stella's altarpiece from George's account of its provenance in the Fesch catalogue.¹⁹

At the Fesch sale Stella's *Jesus in the Temple found by his parents* was bought by Charles George, who had catalogued the collection.²⁰ The Fesch sale unleashed a vast number of old-master paintings onto the market, so the purchasers were often dealers, who stockpiled works of art. Francis Haskell speculated that to follow the dispersal of the Fesch collection to the ends of Europe would result in a Baedeker's guide to the history of taste, illuminating new aspects of collecting.²¹ The discovery of Stella's altarpiece in Melbourne shows that the collection of Napoleon's uncle reached even further afield. Further research into the seventy or so paintings in Goold's collection may reveal that the collection contained more than one work with a Fesch provenance.

The measurements of the Melbourne painting are those given in the Fesch catalogue of 1844.²² Poussin's altarpiece from the Noviciate, the *Miracle of St Francis Xavier* (Fig. 7), was sold in the sale of the Curiosities of the Jesuits at Paris in 1763. Yet the two adjacent altarpieces by Stella and Vouet (Fig. 8) were still recorded in the Noviciate in 1765 in the fourth edition of Dézallier d'Argenville's *Voyage pittoresque de Paris*, whereas Poussin's was no longer present.²³

Goold, who had been appointed Bishop in 1848 (and later Archbishop in 1874) made his first excursion to Europe in 1853. He probably imported the painting to Melbourne on the brig *Amy* that arrived in Melbourne from London on 23rd June 1853, as suggested by the newspaper report in *Freeman's Journal* of 6th August 1853, which describes a 'large case of paintings' consigned to the Bishop of Melbourne. 'They are principally of the Italian school, and are intended for the decoration of the Church of St Francis, Lonsdale Street. Some of these pictures are most gorgeous and of colossal proportion'.²⁴ The words 'gorgeous' and 'colossal proportion' certainly match the Stella as well as the large *Crucifixion*, an anonymous late Italian Baroque painting of c.1680, in the Church of St Francis, Melbourne. The church of St Francis was the oldest Catholic church in Melbourne, and Stella's altarpiece would have been shown there before St Patrick's Cathedral was completed.

Another version of Stella's *Jesus in the Temple found by his parents*, executed with a lavish use of lapis lazuli, is now at the Collegiate Church at Les Andelys (Fig. 6). As the Melbourne painting was unknown, French scholars assumed that the Les Andelys altarpiece was made for the Noviciate, even though the first modern reference does not.²⁵ That Stella's altarpiece at Les Andelys could never have been in the Fesch collection is shown by new information about its provenance. Well before Fesch began to collect, Stella's altarpiece was bought on 24th April 1800

¹⁸ E. Hénin: "L'Enfant Jésus au milieu des Docteurs": Une image de la Parole au XVII^e Siècle. A propos d'une Ekphrasis Jésuite d'un tableau de Stella', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 136 (2000), pp. 31–48.

¹⁹ O'Kane, *op. cit.* (note 1), pp. 122 and 149.

²⁰ I am grateful to Pierre Rosenberg for providing this information from an annotation to the Fesch catalogue in his possession.

²¹ F. Haskell: *Rediscoveries in Art. Some aspects of Taste, Fashion and Collecting in England and France*, London 1976, p. 82.

²² See note 17 above.

²³ A.-N. Dézallier d'Argenville: *Voyage pittoresque de Paris ou indivation De tout ce qu'il y a plus beau dans cette grande Ville, en Peinture, Sculpture, & Architecture*, Paris 1765, p. 358.

²⁴ I am grateful to Damien Cash for this reference. The precise date of the arrival of the brig is given in the 'Shipping News' of the *Geelong Advertiser and Intelligencer* (25th June 1853).

²⁵ E. Gandar: 'Souvenirs de la jeunesse de Nicolas Poussin aux Andelys', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 5 (1860), pp. 65–83, esp. p. 77, attributed the altarpiece to Stella for the first time, followed by J. Thuillier: *Jacques Stella 1596–1657*, Paris 2006, p. 132; G. Chomer and S. Laveissière, ed.: exh. cat. *Jacques Stella (1596–1657)*, Lyon (Musée des



6. *Jesus in the Temple found by his parents*, by Jacques Stella. c.1641. Canvas, 323 by 200 cm. (Church of Notre-Dame-du-Grand Andelys, Andelys, Inventaire Région Haute-Normandie).

from the Chartreuse de Gaillon for the church at Les Andelys, together with a large freestanding sculpture of the *Entombment of Christ*, together costing 800 livres. Stella's painting had previously been misattributed to Eustache Le Sueur.²⁶ Why did Stella make two versions of the same subject, both of high quality?

The church of the Novitiate had three altarpieces, all of highly unusual Jesuit subjects, conceived and executed for the opening of the church in October 1642.²⁷ The architect was the French Jesuit Etienne Martellange. On the high altar was the largest painting Poussin ever made, and the only one he devised of a



7. *Miracle of St Francis Xavier resurrecting a young woman from Cangoxima in Japan*, by Nicolas Poussin. 1641. Canvas, 444 by 234 cm. (Musée du Louvre, Paris).

contemporary subject, *The Miracle of St Francis Xavier resurrecting a young woman from Cangoxima in Japan*, now in the Musée du Louvre, Paris (Fig. 7).²⁸ According to Poussin's correspondence it was painted in a hurry ('*grand précipitation*') in the winter of 1641, and must have been ready by the spring of 1642.²⁹ Stella's altarpiece was probably completed before he returned to Lyon at the beginning of 1642.³⁰

On the other side of the nave, facing Stella's picture, was Simon Vouet's *Virgin offering her protection to the Jesuits* (Fig. 8), now only known from a print as the original was destroyed by fire. All these

Beaux-arts) and Toulouse (Musée des Augustins), 2006–07, p. 148, no. 81.

²⁶ *Congrès archéologique de France. XLVe session. Séances générales tenues au Mans et à Laval en 1878*: Paris 1879, pp. 377–78: 'le sépulcre [. . .] fut acheté de Mme Louis, propriétaire de l'ancienne Chartreuse de Gaillon, par les marguilliers de Notre-Dame d'Andely, le 24 avril 1800, au prix de 800 livres. [. . .] Avec l'achat de ces statues se trouvait compris l'autel de la sainte Vierge de la Chartreuse, dont le retable était orné d'un tableau de prix, représentant l'enfant Jésus au milieu des docteurs. Ce tableau fut longtemps attribué à Eustache Lesueur; il paraît certain qu'il est l'œuvre de Jacques Stella'. Sylvain Laveissière generously brought this reference to my attention.

²⁷ For the most recent account of the Novitiate, see P. Rosenberg: *Nicolas Poussin. Les Tableaux du Louvre*, Paris 2015, pp. 176–83.

²⁸ The placement of the altars is described by A.-N. Dézallier d'Argenville: *Voyage pittoresque de Paris*, Paris 1749, pp. 241–42.

²⁹ J. Thuillier: 'Poussin et ses premiers compagnons français à Rome', *Colloque Nicolas Poussin*, I, Paris 1960, pp. 105–06; see N. Milanovic and M. Szanto: exh. cat. *Poussin et Dieu*, Paris (Musée du Louvre) 2015, pp. 184–87.

³⁰ See Laveissière, *op. cit.* (note 25), p. 46, where Michaël Szanto quotes the letter from Poussin about Stella.

paintings were the subject of discussion and controversy in France, the classicism of Poussin and Stella being contrasted to Vouet's Caravaggesque style.³¹ Stella's infant Jesus is portrayed pointing to heaven with a gesture appropriated from Plato in Raphael's *School of Athens*. These three altarpieces were frequently copied, perhaps for different Jesuit institutions, especially Poussin's *Miracle*.³² Stella's altarpiece was discussed as a Jesuit ekphrasis in a commemorative booklet, *Basilica in onorem Francisci Xaverii* (1642), written by the Jesuits of Claremont, a pamphlet that celebrated all three paintings as rivalling each other in beauty.³³ The reader was invited to experience the Ignatian spirituality of the church and to understand the locations of the sacred stories. Iconographically Stella's painting was the most innovative, and the most discussed of the three works. Should another Jesuit institution have wished to have another version of such an unusual subject, Stella would have made it.³⁴ This appears to be the most likely explanation for the two variants, different only in their minimal differences in size, colour harmonies and the colour of the Virgin's hair.³⁵ The subject, which was previously unknown, became a signature piece for Stella, and there are many known versions of *Jesus in the Temple found by his parents*, one of the last of which, from the church of Saint-Ayoul, Provins, contains his self-portrait.³⁶

It is difficult to compare the two versions of Stella's altarpiece, as the Melbourne version has never been in a conservation laboratory where the pigments might be analysed or the painting subjected to X-radiography.³⁷ The difference in size between the two altarpieces is not negligible, the Melbourne altarpiece, being 21 cm. narrower across and 19 cm. taller, is more square in shape, while the angels are lower in Melbourne than at Les Andelys and the columns larger. There is no record of the dimensions of the Noviciate chapels.

In a famous exchange of letters, Fesch and his nephew Napoleon discussed the reasons they made collections. In a lengthy letter of 14th August 1807 Fesch justified the immense amount of money needed to build his own gallery. High among the reasons given is that he sees the collection as educational, and argues that it is in his house that missionaries leaving for Oceania will be instructed about art. 'These men will dominate far-away places, by virtue of their talents, knowledge of art, and will gain unappreciable advantages'.³⁸ It is not impossible that one of these missionaries was Goold, who could have seen the collection in Rome in the 1830s, when it was relatively easy to visit, before he went to Australia. On his return visits to Europe, Goold could have reacquainted himself with works from the collection at the dealers who acquired pictures at the sale. Goold was not in Europe at the time of the Fesch sale, but he was well connected in Italy.

Goold had received his religious instruction in Rome, spending five years there, and had acquired a distinctly Roman taste in art, based on late eighteenth-century Neo-classicism. Later,



8. *The Virgin offering her protection to the Jesuits*, by Michel Dorigny after Simon Vouet. 1642. Etching with some engraving, 52.4 by 30 cm. (British Museum, London).

during his episcopate, he made five return visits to the city. He was early in his appreciation of Baroque art, and his collection of paintings is only rivalled by the acquisition of the National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin, of a group of fifteen paintings from the Roman dealer Alessandro Aducci in 1856, described by Michael Wynne as a 'remarkable and courageous decision'.³⁹ Aducci, like Goold, was buying from the Fesch collection. Three-quarters of the Fesch collection was of Italian works of art, almost exclusively religious, dating from all periods from the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries. Goold and the National Gallery of Ireland bought only later Baroque painting from the Fesch collection, presumably sharing an Irish taste for the religious fervour of such paintings.

Jacques Stella was a celebrated artist in seventeenth-century France, yet it is only in the twenty-first century that he has been honoured with a monographic exhibition.⁴⁰ Although Stella was Poussin's best friend,⁴¹ and painter to Louis XIII, he was soon eclipsed by Poussin and forgotten, his works sold by his niece with attributions to Poussin.⁴² Stella's extensive correspondence with Poussin, comprising some two hundred letters dating from 1635 until his death, was kept by his descendants, and Félibien (*Entretiens*, 1688) quotes tantalising fragments from them, but they were later lost.⁴³ Today Stella's works are scarcely known outside France. That his masterpiece for the Jesuit Noviciate has been quietly present in the principal Catholic cathedral in Australia, since Archbishop Goold brought it there, is a remarkable discovery.

³¹ J. Vanuxem: 'Les Jésuites et la Peinture au XVII^e Siècle à Paris', *Revue des Arts* 8 (1958), pp.85–91.

³² A.F. Blunt: *Nicolas Poussin*, London 1967, II, p.70, cat. no.101, lists a number of painted and engraved copies of the Japanese miracle; see also J. Hess: *Die Künstlerbiographien von Giovanni Passeri*, Leipzig and Vienna 1934, p.330, note 3.

³³ Published in translation by O. Bonfait and N. MacGregor: exh. cat. *Le Dieu caché: les peintres du Grand Siècle et la vision de Dieu*, Rome (Académie de France) 2000–01, appendix.

³⁴ I am grateful to Nicolas Milanovic for this suggestion.

³⁵ In his account of the painting George describes the Virgin's hair as blonde, whereas in the Les Andelys version the Virgin's hair is dark.

³⁶ S. Kerspern: "'Jésus retrouvé par ses parents dans le Temple' (1654) par Jacques Stella (Provins, Eglise Saint-Ayoul)", *Gazette des Beaux Arts* 114 (1989), pp.1–10.

³⁷ Laveissière has unpublished photographs that show pentimenti in the areas around

the angels' wings and hands.

³⁸ A. Du Casse: *Histoire des négociations diplomatiques relatives aux traités de Mortfontaine, de Lunéville et d'Amiens, pour faire suite aux Mémoires du roi Joseph, précédée de la Correspondance inédite de l'empereur Napoléon I avec le Cardinal Fesch*, Paris 1855, I, for the text of the letter, see pp.134–39, and the quotation on p.136.

³⁹ M. Wynne, ed.: *Later Italian Paintings in the National Gallery of Ireland: The Seventeenth, Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*, Dublin 1987, preface.

⁴⁰ Laveissière, *op. cit.* (note 25).

⁴¹ J. Thuillier: *Nicolas Poussin*, Paris 1988, p.119, quotes Félibien, who wrote that Stella had 'une singulière estime pour le Poussin, qui de sa part n'en avait pas moins pour Stella' (1688).

⁴² See E. Cropper and C. Dempsey: *Nicolas Poussin: Friendship and the Love of Painting*, Princeton 1997.

⁴³ Thuillier, *op. cit.* (note 41), p.12.