

9-1-1983

Additional Notes on Arvid Posse

Nils William Olsson

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag>



Part of the [Genealogy Commons](#), and the [Scandinavian Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Olsson, Nils William (1983) "Additional Notes on Arvid Posse," *Swedish American Genealogist*: Vol. 3 : No. 3 , Article 4.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/swensonsag/vol3/iss3/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Augustana Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Swedish American Genealogist by an authorized editor of Augustana Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@augustana.edu.

Additional Notes on Arvid Posse

Nils William Olsson

In the June, 1981 issue of *SAG* (Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 78-79) Erik Wikén of Stockholm tells of the tragic death in San Antonio, TX in 1831 of Count Arvid Posse, scion of an old and illustrious Swedish family, who had served as a chamberlain to the Royal Swedish Court and had held a commission as lieutenant in the Royal Västgötadal Regiment.

On March 28, 1818 he had married in Rome the attractive niece of Napoleon, Christine Alexandrine Egypta Bonaparte, the daughter of Lucien Bonaparte, Napoleon's brother, and Christine Boyer, the daughter of a French innkeeper in Toulon.¹ She was twenty years old at the time. The couple moved to Sweden and lived for a time at the estate of Fogelvik in the Tjust archipelago in Tryserum Parish (Kalm.).²

The marriage was not a success, possibly due to Arvid Posse's restless nature, but it may also have been due to Christine Bonaparte's residing in an isolated area of Sweden, far from the rest of her family, domiciled in southern Europe. By 1824 the marriage was dissolved and Christine entered into a second marriage to Lord Dudley Coutts Stuart. She died in Rome 1847.³

On a recent visit to the Bergqvara estate on the outskirts of Växjö, Sweden I came across some interesting memorabilia which provide a fascinating link to the past — to Count Arvid Posse and his princess wife. These mementos are now in the possession of Count Carl and Countess Kerstin Posse, present owners of Bergqvara, and distantly related to Arvid Posse. These items are three works of art which emanate from the period of Arvid Posse's marriage to Christine Bonaparte. Two of these works of art are miniature paintings of the couple in question and the third is a sketch or water color of Fogelvik, done by the Princess herself.

If these three works of art could speak, they could probably tell us much of the principals involved. The miniature of Christine Bonaparte, executed May 6, 1819, just a little more than a year after the marriage, shows us a beautiful French girl with a delicate face but with much sadness in her eyes. What was she thinking as she sat for the artist, none other than Lorentz Sparrgren, one of Sweden's most celebrated miniaturists at that time?⁴

The second miniature of Arvid Posse shows us another type, a cool self-assured young man, an officer and a gentleman from the highest social circles in Stockholm. The name of the artist, Colantoni, is inscribed on the miniature, but he seems to be unknown to art historians.⁵



Count Arvid Posse



Princess Christine Bonaparte

The third of the Posse mementos is a sketch or pastel of the estate of Fogelvik, located on an island at the mouth of the estuary of the Baltic, which leads up to the small city of Valdemarsvik. It is a romantic rendition of Fogelvik, done by a young 21 year-old woman, exiled to Sweden from the sunny south. It is signed by the artist and dated 1819, the same year as the miniature was painted in Stockholm.

On the back of Christine Bonaparte's sketch is a notation in a later hand which tells something of the provenance of the pastel and how it returned to the Posse family, almost hundred years after it was completed.⁶

I am very much in debt to Carl and Kerstin Posse of Bergqvara for their cooperation and help in procuring photographs of these works of art. These visual images have added a new dimension and understanding of the tragic story of Arvid Posse and his princess.

¹ For additional information on Napoleon and his siblings see R.F. Delderfeld, *The Golden Millstones — Napoleon's sisters and brothers* (New York, 1964).

² In 1812 Fogelvik had been purchased by Arvid Posse's brother, Carl Henrik Posse, who lived there until his death in 1823. He was married to Adine de Bréant, a vivacious French woman, who returned to Paris after the death of her husband. In her testament she provided for Fogelvik going to her brother-in-law, Claes Fredrik Posse.-Gustaf Elgenstierna, *Den introducerade svenska adelns ättartavlor, I–IX* (Stockholm, 1925–1936), VI, p. 11; *Slott och herresäten i Sverige; Småland, jämt Öland och Gotland*, p. 291.

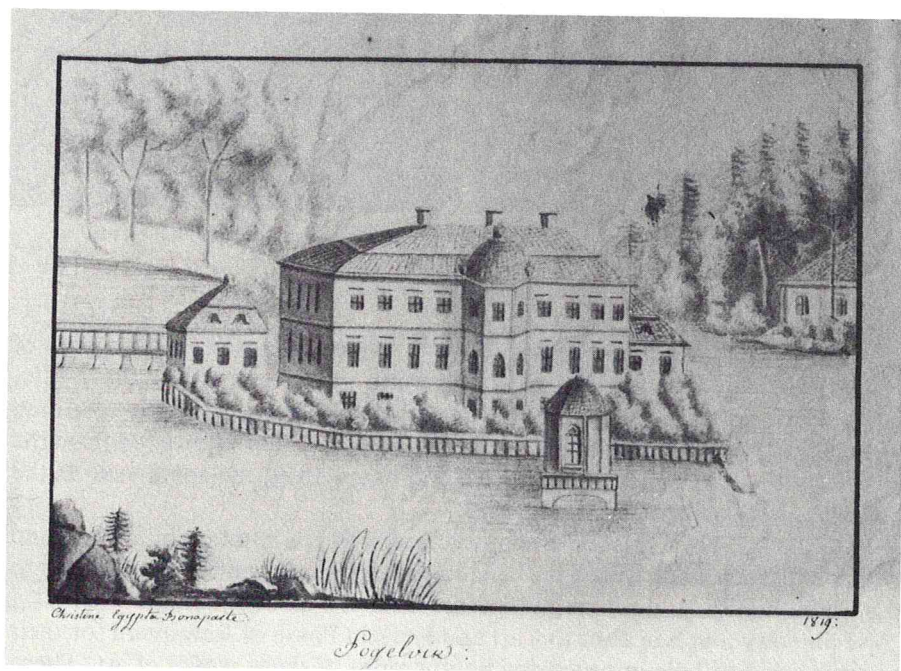
³ Elgenstierna, *Svenska adelns ättartavlor*, VI, p. 11.

⁴ Lorentz Sparregren (1763–1828). After studies in Paris he returned to Sweden to become professor of art at the Royal Academy of Art. — *Svenskt konstnärslexikon*, I–V (Malmö, 1952–1967), V, pp. 227–228.

⁵ His name is not to be found in Ulrich Thieme and Felix Becker, *Allgemeines Lexikon der Bildenden Künstler von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart* I–XXXVII (Leipzig, 1907–1950) nor in E. Bénédiz, *Dictionnaire critique et documentaire de peintres, sculpteurs, dessinateurs et graveurs*, I–X (Paris, 1976).

⁶ The inscription on the back of the sketch translates as follows:

“This picture of Fogelvik in Tjust, which once belonged to Carl Knutsson Bonde, was done in 1819 by Napoleon’s niece, Princess Christine Alexandrine Egypte Bonaparte, daughter of Lucien Bonaparte, Prince of Canino and Monsignano (1775–1840), and Christine Boyer (1773–1801). Princess Egypte was born 1798 and died 1847. She was married in Rome 1818 to Count Arvid Fredriksson Posse, chamberlain and lieutenant, born 1782. Count and Countess Posse resided at Fogelvik. This picture was bought 1927 by Lage Göransson Posse, born 1888, from Captain Seth von Konow of Stockholm.”



View of Fogelvik by Princess Christine Bonaparte, dated 1819.