

Familiae Melissa

Melissa flammam Pompeiorum in nave effugit. Postridie, Melissa de familiā cogitabat. Pater Melissa erat Syphax et fundum in Graeciā habuit. Mater Melissa erat Daphne, sed perivit* postquam Melissa nata* erat. Syphax igitur Melissam multe amavit et Melissa curavit. Fundus multos equos et animalia habuit et horreum erat ubi Melissa ludet*. **perivit* = died nata* = born ludet* = would play**

1. What was Melissa doing after she fled Pompeii?

3. Where did Melissa live with her father?

2. Who were Melissa's parents?

4. Why did Syphax care for Melissa?

Syphax pecuniam non habuit sed vita non erat dura in fundo. Syphax in agris laboravit quod Melissa in horreo praeerat. Sed equi et animalia a morbis* interfecta erant, ergo Syphax multam pecuniam debuit*. Syphax in fundo cum Melissā esse volebat, sed seges non erat bona. Syphax igitur agros et totum frumentum vendidit*. **a morbis* = by disease debuit* = owed vendidit* = sold**

5. Why did Syphax work in the fields?

7. What did Syphax want?

6. What happened to the animals on the farm?

8. What did Syphax do because the crops weren't good?

Proximo anno* Syphax aeger* erat. Laborare non potuit et cibum* non habebant igitur Syphax Melissam familiae Romanae vendidit*. Pater familiae erat Caecilius et villam in Pompeiis habuit. Melissa apud Romanos laboravit sed de familiā in Graeciā semper* cogitabat. **proximo anno* = the next year aeger*=sick cibum* = food semper* = always vendidit* = sold**

9. What happened the next year?

10. What did Syphax do because he didn't have food?

Artifact. Use the passage below to answer the questions that follow in complete sentences.

Giving Away One's Child

Grinding poverty sometimes forced people to give away their children, however much they loved them.⁴⁵ This official document of relinquishment, found at Oxyrhynchus, was written in A.D. 554. The girl mentioned in this document is apparently being adopted by a family, as was the young boy in the previous passage. Sometimes, however, parents were forced to sell to slave-dealers children whom they could not support.

42

P. Oxy. 1895 (Select Papyri 11)

I, Aurelia Herais. . . .⁴⁶ My husband died and I was left, to toil and suffer for my daughter by him, to provide her with the barest necessities of life. And now I no longer have the means to feed her. . . . She is now about nine years old. I have requested that you receive her from me as your daughter, and I acknowledge that I have handed her over to you from now and forever as your legal daughter so that you may provide her with the necessities of life and fill the position of parents to a daughter. And I acknowledge that I have no power henceforth to reclaim her from you. If I do so, I agree to pay you for all the expenses of raising her.

This agreement, written in one copy only, is valid. I have been questioned carefully and I have given my consent.

Shelton, J. (1998). *As the Romans Did: A Sourcebook in Roman Social History* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

What were two ways in which children were given up?

Describe the mother's situation in this document.

Describe the rights which the mother still has after the adoption.

How would this mother be able to get her daughter back?

Exit Ticket: Answer these questions using complete sentences.

How was Melissa’s situation similar to the one described above?

What is the greatest difference between how Melissa and this child were given up?

What is your reaction to Syphax and Melissa’s situation?
