Laws in Motion

Trace how medieval learning shaped public decisions

AWH.C.10.5.B "Identify the growing influence of universities, Roman law, canon law, and Scholasticism."

NAME _____ DATE _____

1 READ AND MARK

Read it twice

YOUR JOB Underline one detail that shows the influence of universities, Roman law, canon law, and Scholasticism. Write U, R, C, or S beside each detail to show which influence it reveals.

Who Decides a Loan Dispute?

1 In the thirteenth century, a merchant in an Italian town might ask a city court to enforce a loan. The written agreement named the sum, the due date, and an added payment for waiting. The borrower argued that the added payment was unfair. This dispute reached beyond two neighbors because cities needed rules for trade, while church leaders judged some practices by religious standards. A town official could seek advice from people trained to read difficult legal texts. In growing university centers such as Bologna, students studied law with masters, copied commentaries, and carried their learning into work as judges and advisers.

2 One body of learning was Roman law, preserved in the compilation ordered by Emperor Justinian in the sixth century and studied again in medieval Europe. Its rules and methods helped legal experts analyze ownership, agreements, and obligations. In the merchant's case, an adviser might use Roman legal ideas to examine whether the borrower had agreed to repay the original sum. Church courts, however, applied canon law, the church's body of law, to matters under their authority. Church leaders condemned usury, commonly understood as charging interest on a loan. A church official might therefore challenge the extra payment, even if a city court considered the agreement.

3 Universities also spread Scholasticism, a method of learning that tested questions by comparing arguments and authorities. At Paris, masters and students practiced stating objections, examining texts, and giving reasoned replies. A scholar considering the loan might ask how a promise to pay could be weighed against the church's ban on usury. Scholastic debate did not give every court the same power or guarantee one verdict. Instead, it trained educated people to explain disagreements with careful reasoning. As graduates entered courts, church offices, and city governments, university learning gave written law and structured argument a stronger place in public decisions.

2 ANSWER WITH EVIDENCE

Use the passage

1. Which detail shows that universities influenced decisions outside their classrooms?

2. How could Roman law shape the city court's handling of the loan?

3. Why might canon law lead a church official to oppose part of the agreement?

4. How might Scholasticism change an adviser's discussion of the dispute without settling it?

3 YOUR TURN

Your own words

A baker and a buyer disagree about who owns an oven after a sale. In four sentences, explain how at least two influences from the reading could shape the way people handle this new dispute, then state one question the passage cannot answer about its outcome.

ANSWER KEY

Laws in Motion

HIGH SCHOOL · AWH.C.10.5.B

PART 1 · READ AND MARK

Underline one detail that shows the influence of universities, Roman law, canon law, and Scholasticism. Write U, R, C, or S beside each detail to show which influence it reveals. Accept any marking that follows this job and points at the right text.

PART 2 · ANSWERS

#	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	Which detail shows that universities influenced decisions outside their classrooms?	**University students carried their learning into work as judges and advisers, and graduates entered courts, church offices, and city governments.**
2	How could Roman law shape the city court's handling of the loan?	**An adviser could use Roman legal ideas about agreements and obligations to examine whether the borrower had agreed to repay the original sum.**
3	Why might canon law lead a church official to oppose part of the agreement?	**The added payment could be considered interest on a loan, which church leaders condemned as usury.**
4	How might Scholasticism change an adviser's discussion of the dispute without settling it?	**The adviser could compare the promise to pay with the church's objection to usury, consider arguments on both sides, and give a reasoned reply.**

PART 3 · YOUR TURN (SAMPLE ANSWER)

A university-trained adviser could help town officials read the oven agreement closely. Roman law might guide their questions about ownership and what each person agreed to do. An adviser using Scholasticism could compare both sides' arguments before offering a reasoned reply. The passage does not tell us what the agreement says, so we cannot know who owns the oven.

Accept any two influences applied plausibly to the oven dispute. The final sentence should identify missing information rather than claim that the passage determines the owner.