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|  | GAELIC SOCIETY UNDER BREHON LAW (Spoke Irish – Loyal to the Gaelic Lords) | SOCIETY IN THE PALE UNDER COMMON LAW – English system (Spoke English – Loyal to the English King) |
| Law and order | * The Brehon (judge) administered the laws * Courts held on hillsides * No gaols or executions * Punishment was an eric (fine) paid by the guilty person’s family | * Judges appointed to go from place to place * Courts held in a courthouse in a town * Sentences were harse – beheading, hanging, prison |
| Marriage | * Wives could keep their own names * Wives could keep their property when they married * Divorce allowed * Children born outside marriage could inherit their share of their father’s property | * Wives took their husband’s name on marriage * Wives lost control of her property and money on marriage * Divorce was forbidden * Children born outside marriage could not inherit their father’s property |
| Land | * The land was the property of the whole clan (a group of people who shared the same family name) and not the chieftain. * The chieftain was elected by the deirbhfine (leading members of the clan) * Disagreements often led to warfare * A person’s wealth was calculated by the number of cows they owned. Cattle- grazing was the main form of agriculture, with some tillage. * The freemen of the clan owned the cattle. * Next in the hierarchy were the tenants and labourers (few rights) | * The land belonged to the lord * The eldest son became lord on the death of his father. * This system of passing land from father to eldest son was preferred by the English because they believed it would avoid warfare. * Favoured tillage farming over cattle-grazing |
| Dress | * Men: Knee-length tunic , an Irish mantle, long moustache and a glib (fringe), barefoot * Women: Long tunic, Irish mantle, barefoot | * Regarded Irish fashion as crude and uncivilised, further proof of their backwardness |