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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
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| 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
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| 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
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| 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
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