In the west the linguistic situation was much more complex, for the historical background was made up of a mixture of P-Celtic speakers persisting from the old kingdom of Cumbria, Old English speakers who had first settled west of the Pennines as early as the seventh century, and a double dose of Scandinavian speakers - Danes pushing north-westward from Yorkshire and Norwegians penetrating eastward up the Solway Firth (itself a purely Norse place-name), many of whom must have spent a considerable time or even have been born and brought up in a strongly Gaelic (i.e. Q-Celtic) speaking region, most probably the Western Isles of Scotland[28]. It would therefore be rash to assert that there was any linguistic uniformity on the West March in the earlier middle ages, yet it is certain that the Border itself, the political line running from the upper Solway into the River Esk and following that stream to the confluence of the Kershope Burn (whence it ran up the Kershope to reach and then follow the Cheviot watershed), marked no linguistic division. The melting pot of languages was as much a feature of Scottish Dumfries-shire as of English Cumberland[29]. Moreover, the evidence seems convincing that an almost common form of Middle English speech, doubtless possessing a strong Scandinavian element, was coming into general use in the thirteenth century in northern Cumberland and eastern Dumfries-shire.

From the standpoint of social and political organisation it must be doubted whether the Anglo-Scottish Border marked any significant divide for the first three and a half centuries of its existence. North and south the underlying structure consisted of multiple estates, usually called 'shires' (especially on the east side of the country), which were derived from the manner in which royal or princely lordship had been exercised in Dark Age times and indeed probably since an even earlier period. Upon this structure a military feudal organisation had been superimposed by the monarchy, from *c.* 1090 in northern England and from *c.* 1110 in southern Scotland. The lordships or baronies which were created by this imposed feudal order do not seem to have been significantly different in England and Scotland, at least before the fourteenth century[30]. In both kingdoms there were 'anomalies', e.g. in England the remarkable lordship or liberty of Tynedale, the valleys of North and South Tyne, which was scarcely tamed into normality by being called the 'manor of Wark' by English royal clerks in the later thirteenth century[31]; or the archbishop of York's powerful liberty of Hexhamshire, centred upon the ancient church of Saint Wilfred (674)[32]. Comparably in Scotland the prior of Durham's liberty of

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28 Fellows-Jensen, G., *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the North West* (Copenhagen, 1985); Armstrong, A.M., *The Place-Names of Cumberland* (English Place-Name Society, 1950-52).

29 Fellows-Jensen, G., *Scandinavian Settlement Names in the North West*, 307-321.

30 Barrow, G.W.S., "Northern English Society in the early middle ages", in: *Northern History* 4 (1969), especially pp. 10-12, 18-20; Barrow, *Kingdom of the Scots*, chap. 1; Bartlett and Mackay, *Medieval Frontier Societies*, 9-12, 14-16.

31 *A History of Northumberland* (15 vols., Newcastle upon Tyne, Northumberland County History Committee), XV (ed. Dodds, M.H., 1940), 155-298; Stevenson, J., *Documents Illustrative of the History of Scotland* (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1870), I, 28-9, 37, 59 etc.

32 *A History of Northumberland*, III (ed. Hinds, A.B., 1896).