

3. ABASCE, and see INDIE

<i>abas, abbas</i> Z	<i>abassaia, abassia</i> VL	<i>absce</i> L
<i>abasa, abasia (cor.), abassa,</i> <i>abasse, abaste, bassa</i> V	<i>abasyam</i> G	<i>albaxia</i> VA
<i>abasce</i> F, L, TA ¹ , Z	<i>abasye</i> FB	<i>bascia</i> P
<i>abascia</i> LT, P; R	<i>abaxia</i> V	<i>bascie, nabascie</i> TA ¹
<i>abascie</i> TA ¹ , TA ³	<i>abbasaie</i> FAr	<i>nabasce</i> TA ¹ , TA ^{1r} , TA ^{3r}
<i>abase, abasee, basce</i> F	<i>abbasie, albasie</i> FA	<i>nabascia</i> TA ³
<i>abasia</i> F, Fr, t, FAt, FB	<i>abissia, abixia</i> VB	
		<i>abisscini</i> R

I have hesitated between «Abasce» and «Abascie», but have come to the conclusion that the more probable form is «Abasce», with the use of *-sce* as a simple notation of *-š* (cf. «Chescemir»). The original is Arabic Ḥabaš, «Abyssinian». While the weak *h-* has been hardened into *c-* by Polo in such words as «Cogacin» and «Curmos», the stronger *h-* has been dropped by him in «Abasce» as in «Avarium». This is not easy to explain, since Polo also drops the weak *h-* in «Ulau». European usage concurs with Polo when we write «Abyssinia» and «Aleppo». For «Abasce», cf. Y, II, 431; YULE, *Hobson-Jobson*², s. v. «Abyssinia» and «Hubshee»; DAMES, *Barbosa*, I, 36, 39; EI, s. v. «Abyssinia». Marignolli's «Abasty» is certainly a misreading for «Abascy», practically the same form as in Polo (cf. Y¹, III, 222-223; Wy, 532).

The name «Ethiopia», given by V as another name of «Abasce», was used sometimes in a looser way. It is nevertheless surprising that, in the summary we have of part of a letter written by Giovanni da Montecorvino from «Cambaliech» (see «Cambaluc» = Peking) on February 13, 1306 (cf. GOLUBOVICH, *Bibl. bio-bibl.*, II, 140), it should be said that envoys came to Brother Giovanni from Ethiopia, asking him to go there or to send missionaries, since from the days of Matthew the Evangelist and his disciples these people had not been instructed in the faith of Christ. VAN DEN WYNGAERT (Wy, 355), in agreement with MOULE (*JRAS*, 1924, 556), was of opinion that our Ethiopia was not meant, but some region in Asia. It seems clear, as already suspected by YULE (Y¹, III, 7), that the «envoys» saw Montecorvino in India, not in China, but I am not certain that this «Ethiopia» is to be looked for in Asia, or even in Socotra, as YULE supposed after ASSEMANI. The mention of S. Matthew is of some importance. He is said by the *Breviary* to have preached in «Ethiopia», and, just in the same way as Montecorvino speaks of S. Matthew on the subject of «Ethiopia», Marignolli names him in his paragraph on «Abasty», i. e. «Abascy», which is certainly Abyssinia. So Montecorvino, I think, probably believed that the «envoys» came from this last country. The same may hold good for what Jourdain Cathala says of Ethiopia in a letter written at Tana (near Bombay) in 1323, and the mislocation of Ethiopia in the would-be Marino Sanudo map (which is, in fact, Paolino da Venezia's; cf. GOLUBOVICH, *Bibl. bio-bibl.*, II, 84-85) is of no greater account than the fact of the letter addressed on December 1, 1329, by Pope John XXII (not «Alex. II» as in Y, II, 432)