

Sebastian Cabot was the second of the three sons of Sir John Cabot, a Venetian, occasionally resident in England, who appears, from his son's account, to have died shortly after the news of the great discovery of Columbus; and, therefore, although some think that he commanded during the voyage in which the continent of America was discovered, it is more probable that the idea originated with him, but was carried out after his death by his son; at least, thus far it is certain, that Peter Martyr, a competent witness, as, in his "Decades of the Ocean," he styles Sebastian his particular friend, whom he delights to have at his house, makes no mention of the father, although both patents of Henry VII. are granted to John Cabot, the Venetian, and his sons Lewis, Sebastian, and Sancius.

The first, bearing date 5th March, 1496, permitted them "to proceed with *five* ships to the discovery of new and unknown lands, unvisited and unclaimed by Christians, in the seas to the east, the west, and the north, very young, yet hauynge, nevertheless, some knowledge of letters of humanitie and of the sphere."