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by Robert W. Haynes

Austerity imposed a constant pressure on Thomas Elyot during his tenure years, though his readers will encounter in his work a longing for literate moderation and scholarly tranquility. Paul Hofkirk's book, The Life and Times of Sir Thomas Elyot, Englishman (1991) aptly opened by describing a key moment in the humanist's life, the occasion in 1572 when he resigned from his exalted embassy to the Continent to assume a curacy in the Church of Rome. That same year, he found himself censured by the Pope and by the fact that Elyot was already married as much by law of Anne Boleyn as by religious scripture. The catastrophic fall of Rome by the soldiers of Charles v in 1527 had severely damaged the...