Author’s Note on Translations

With only a few exceptions, indicated in notes to the text, the translations in this book are my own. I have preferred to erring on the side of literalness, and as a consequence some passages lack that general felicity of expression which might with justice be demanded of my own prose. Mersenne’s French, in particular, is often long-winded, convoluted, and even ungrammatical; it would risk misrepresenting the nuances of his meaning, and would certainly misrepresent his literary talents, to strive for polished English renderings. These considerations do not, of course, absolve me of responsibility for such lapses in translation as I must undoubtedly have committed through my own ignorance or stylistic shortcomings.

P. R. D.
Mersenne and the Learning of the Schools