

Hérigone, Pierre | Encyclopedia.com

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(d. Paris [?], ca. 1643)

mathematics.

Very little is known of Hérigone's life. He was apparently of Basque origin and spent most of his life in Paris as a teacher of mathematics. He also served on a number of official committees dealing with mathematical subjects, notably the one appointed by Richelieu in 1634 to judge the practicality of Morin's proposed scheme for determining longitude from the moon's motion. With the other members of this committee (Étienne Pascal, Mydorge, Beaugrand, J. C. Boulenger, L. de la Porte) he became embroiled in the ensuing controversy with Morin.

Hérigone's only published work of any consequence is the *Cursus mathematicus*, a six-volume compendium of elementary and intermediate mathematics in French and Latin. Although there is little substantive originality in the *Cursus*, it shows an extensive knowledge and understanding of contemporary mathematics. Its striking feature is the introduction of a complete system of mathematical and logical notation, very much in line with the seventeenth-century preoccupation with universal languages. Yet none of Hérigone's notational conventions seem to have become accepted, and his other works are of negligible importance.

It is as a teacher, systematizer, and disseminator of mathematics that Hérigone must be judged. As such he was no doubt a full member of the community of French mathematicians of the first half of the seventeenth century.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

I. Original Works. Hérigone's only important published work is *Cursus mathematicus nova, brevi et clara methodo demonstratus*, 6 vols. (Paris, 1634–1642). There are three other "editions" of the *Cursus* (1643, 1644), but these consist of nothing but sheets from the original ed. with a few deletions and additions, and new title pages. Hérigone also published a paraphrase of the first six books of Euclid (1639), but it consists of little more than the French portion of vol. I of the *Cursus*; there is also a spurious 2nd ed. (1644).

II. Secondary Literature. What little information there is on Hérigone has been collected by B. Boncompagni in *Bullettino di bibliografia e di storia delle scienze matematiche e fisiche*, **2** (1869), 472–476; and P. Tannery in *Mémoires scientifiques*, **X** (Paris, 1930), 287–289. The controversy with Morin is described by J. E. Montucla in *Histoire des mathématiques*, 2nd ed., **IV** (Paris, 1802), 543–545. A list of Hérigone's mathematical symbols is given by F. Cajori in *History of Mathematical Notations*, **I** (Chicago, 1928), 200–204, *passim*.

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