For hundreds of years, state-sponsored corsairs and petty maritime bandits from "Barbary"—comprised of the Ottoman regencies of Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli, and the independent kingdom of Morocco—preyed on Christian Europe's ships and shores, carrying away cargo and human beings. Between the mid seventeenth and the early nineteenth century, France pursued what it cast as two crusades against captivity in North Africa: the first to redeem Catholic countrymen; the second to liberate white Europeans. The transposition of a religious quest onto a secular undertaking helped justify the invasion of what became the nation of Algeria. And efforts to reverse and then eradicate Barbary slavery helped both to define the attributes of French belonging and demarcate the boundaries of Europe.
chrétiens qui peuvent servir de lumière aux roys et aux souverains de la chrétienté pour garantir leurs Etats des incursions des Turcs et reprandre ceux qu'ils ont usurpés sur eux. Avec une relation des voyages faits dans la Turquie, la Thébaïde et la Barbarie (Lyon: A. Briasson, 1686)