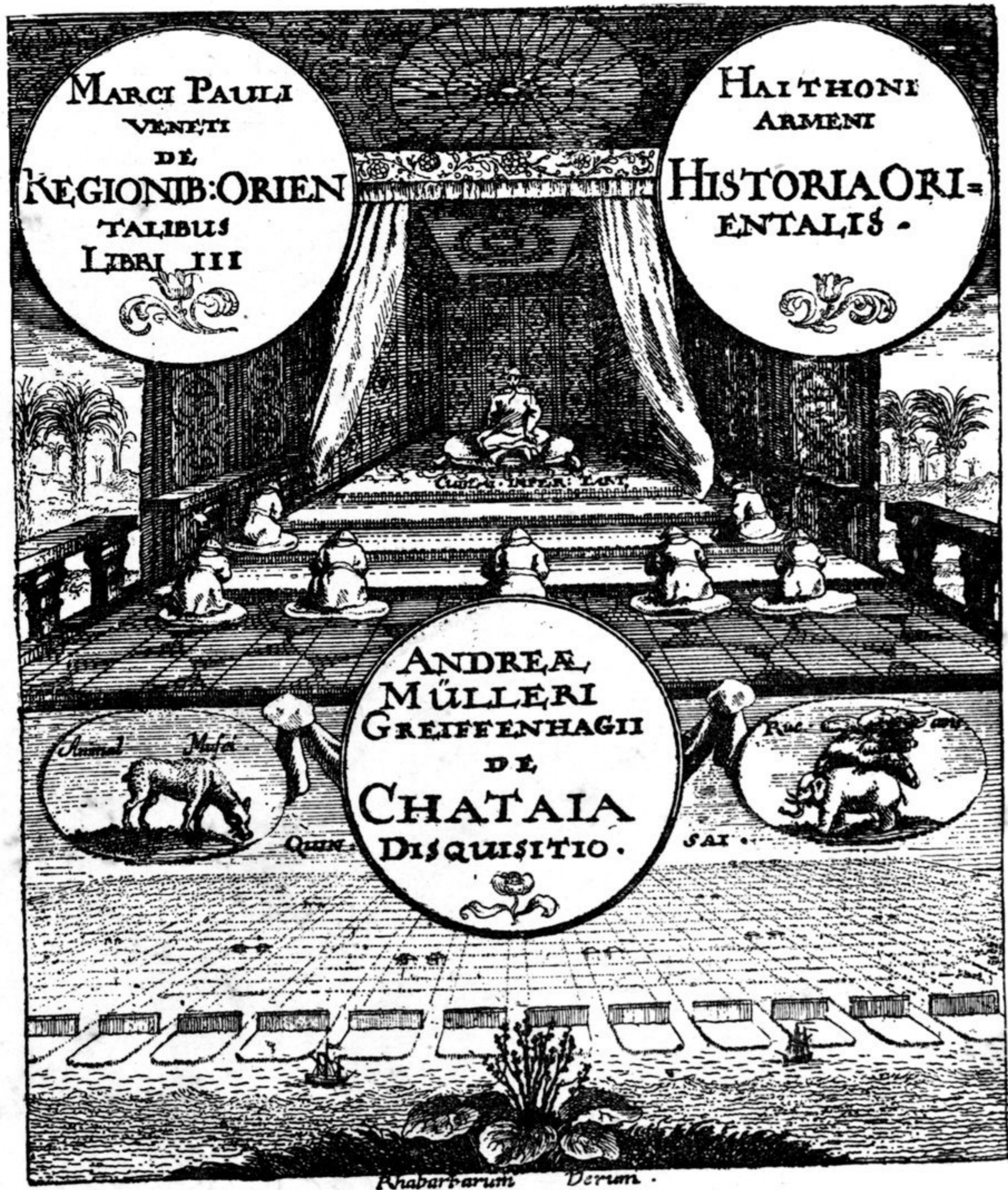


Bochart quotes a bitter Arabic proverb which says, "Good-Faith, the Ghul, and the Gryphon ('Angka) are three names of things that exist nowhere." And Mas'udi, after having said that whatever country he visited he always found that the people believed these monstrous creatures to exist in regions as remote as possible from their own, observes: "It is not that our reason absolutely rejects the possibility of the existence of the *Nesuds* (see vol. i. p. 206) or of the '*Angka*, and other beings of that rare and wondrous order; for there is nothing in their existence incompatible with



Frontispiece showing the Bird *Rukh*.

the Divine Power; but we decline to believe in them because their existence has not been manifested to us on any irrefragable authority."

The circumstance which for the time localized the *Rukh* in the direction of Madagascar was perhaps some rumour of the great fossil *Aepyornis* and its colossal eggs, found in that island. According to Geoffroy St. Hilaire, the Malagashes assert that the bird which laid those great eggs still exists, that it has an immense power of