

Authorship and Chronology of Vagbhata's Astangasangraha and Astangahridayasamhita: A Critical Review

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ABSTRACT:

Background: The *Astangasangraha* (AS) and the *Astangahridayasamhita* (AH) are jointly attributed to a physician named *Vagbhata* and are grouped, with the *Charaka Samhita* and *Sushruta Samhita*, as the *Brihat Trayi* (greater triad) of classical Ayurveda. Whether the two texts were written by one author across a career, or by two individuals within a shared teaching lineage, has been contested for over a century. **Objective:** This review re-examines the authorship and *kala nirnaya* (chronology) of the *Vagbhata* corpus through the primary philological record: the 1907 exchange between Jolly and Hoernle, Hoernle's 1909 Bower-manuscript study, Gode's 1944 analysis of *Indu*'s commentary, Bhattacharyya's 1947 single-authorship defense, and a 1963 analytical article, read alongside secondary scholarship (Vogel, Wujastyk, Sharma, Meulenbeld). **Methods:** Sources were identified through direct reading of primary journal literature and consultation of institutional digital archives. Claims are tiered throughout by how directly each was verified against its original source. **Results:** Two defensible positions emerge. A two-author reading rests on stylistic, doctrinal, sectarian, and commentarial divergence, reinforced by Gode's finding that *Indu* cites the AH as a distinct authority in his own commentary on the AS. A single-author reading rests on the AH's own 'nectar verse' and on unity testimony from three eleventh- to twelfth-century commentators. However, the nectar verse's authenticity is independently questioned by two unrelated lines of textual criticism, weakening the single-author school's strongest evidence, while three independent citation chains converge on a terminus ante quem near 800 CE, against which Bhattacharyya's ninth-century chronology sits uneasily. **Conclusion:** The cumulative evidence tilts, cautiously, toward two related authors rather than one, though the question remains open. Resolution most likely requires new manuscript evidence or stylometric analysis, for which India's expanding digital Ayurveda-text infrastructure now offers real opportunity.

KEYWORDS: Ayurvedic historiography, *Brihat Trayi*, commentarial tradition, *kala nirnaya*, manuscript chronology, medical literature, Sanskrit textual criticism.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Classical Ayurveda is anchored by the *Brihat Trayi* (greater triad): *Charaka* for internal medicine, *Sushruta* for surgery, and *Vagbhata* for a synthesis across all eight branches of medicine, the *ashtanga* (eightfold division). [1] A well-known couplet, traced to the *Harita Samhita*, assigns *Atreya*, *Sushruta*, and *Vagbhata* to the three mythological *Yuga* (world-ages):

“Atreya [is the physician-authority] of the Krita yuga; Sushruta is held [authoritative] for the Dvapara; and in the Kali [yuga], one named Vagbhata attains renown.” Source: *Harita Samhita*, via *Realms of Ayurveda* (Mehta), and Sharma's *Vagbhata-vivecana*. [2, 3]

Its repeated citation across unrelated sources shows how deeply the assumption of a single ‘*Vagbhata*’ is embedded in Ayurvedic teaching, beyond what specialist philology actually supports. [2, 3]

‘*Vagbhata*,’ however, denotes not one text but at least two: the *Astangasamgraha* (AS), in mixed prose and verse, of about 150 chapters, and the *Astangahridayasamhita* (AH), shorter at about 120 chapters and composed entirely in verse. [4] Both share an identical six-part structure (*Sutra-*, *Sharira-*, *Nidana-*, *Chikitsa-*, *Kalpa/Siddhi-*, and *Uttarasthana*) and both claim descent from a physician born in *Sindhu*, son of one *Simhagupta*, grandson of an earlier physician of the same name. [1] At minimum, then, two men named *Vagbhata* existed within one family before the authorship question is even posed. [5]

The stakes are not merely biographical. If the AH is a later author's deliberate condensation of the AS, its departures in *marma* (vital-point) classification, marriageable age, and religious invocation reflect a second mind revising at a different historical moment; if the AH is the same author's mature restatement, those departures simply record personal development across a career. The distinction affects how the medical content of both texts should be read historically, and how later literature that cites *Vagbhata* (*Madhava*, *Vrinda*, *Chakrapani*, *Vangasena*) should itself be dated. Meulenbeld's *A History of Indian*

Medical Literature, the standard modern reference, calls the relationship “far from solved” [4] a judgment this review takes as its starting point.

This review therefore states the principal scholarly positions, grounded in primary argumentation wherever direct access allowed; maps the range of chronological placements the evidence actually supports; separates what is contested for authenticity from what is contested only in interpretation; and reaches a qualified, rather than premature, conclusion.

2. MATERIAL & METHODS

Sources drawn on here differ considerably in evidentiary weight, so three tiers are used throughout. Material checked directly against the original text is identified as such. Material drawn from named secondary scholarship is attributed to that source rather than treated as independently verified. Material from consolidated research-synthesis work is flagged and used sparingly.

Six primary-source articles anchor this review and were read in full, with quotations checked against the original text: Jolly's 1907 note on I-tsing and *Vagbhata*, [6] Hoernle's 1907 reply, [7] Hoernle's 1909 study of the Bower Manuscript, [8] Gode's 1944 analysis of *Indu's* commentary, [9] Bhattacharyya's 1947 defense of single authorship, [10] and a 1963 article on the AS. [1] The literary-research infrastructure of the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) and its *Ayurvedagranthasamuccaya* (APTA) digital library were consulted directly online, URLs live-verified in 2026. [11, 12] A further set of sources is treated as secondary scholarship and cited accordingly: Vogel's 1965 study of the AH's Tibetan version, [13] Wujastyk's 1985 paper, [14] Sharma's Hindi monograph *Vagbhata-vivecana*, [3] Meulenbeld's reference history, [4] and Cordier's 1896 monograph, known here through the secondary literature engaging it. [5] A further set of secondary and tertiary sources, drawn on for narrower, specific points rather than sustained argument, includes Mehta's chapter history of Indian medicine, [2] Keith's and Winternitz's standard histories of

Sanskrit and Indian literature, [15,16] and the published English translations of the AS and AH by Vidyanath and Singh and by Srikantha Murthy. [17, 18]

Material was retained where it engaged directly with the authorship or chronology of the AS or AH and came from a peer-reviewed journal, named monograph, institutional publication, or primary text with named scholarly translation; encyclopedic or unverifiable material was excluded. This is a critical narrative review rather than a systematic review, and no bibliographic database was queried against a pre-registered protocol; the supplementary search strategy used for verification and currency-checking is reported separately below.

Search Strategy: PubMed and Scopus were queried using a Boolean strategy combining author-name, text-title, and authorship/chronology terms; both returned zero indexed results, consistent with the core primary sources sitting in Orientalist journals outside biomedical database coverage.

Table 1: Comparison of Astangasamgraha and Astangahridayasamhita

Feature	Astangasamgraha (AS)	Astangahridayasamhita (AH)
Composition style	Prose and verse (<i>champu</i>)	Verse only
Total chapters (approx.)	150	120
Sthana structure	Sutra (40), Sharira (12), Nidana (16), Chikitsa (24), Kalpa (8), Uttara	Same six sthana, more concise throughout
Prognostic (arishta) chapters	4 chapters	2 chapters
Religious invocation	Buddha invoked by name	Syncretic; a different invocation in parallel passages
Genealogical ('son of Simhagupta') information	In Uttarasthana body text	Only in colophons of some printed editions
Mercury (<i>rasa</i>) references	Absent	Present
Marriageable age (male / female)	25 / 15 years	20 / 16 years
Total <i>marma</i> count	107 (5 categories)	97 (introduces <i>dhamani-marma</i> , vessel-points, as a further category)
Manuscript survival	Thin; comparatively few witnesses	Wide; numerous witnesses worldwide

The AS's own *Uttarasthana*, chapter 50, preserves the corpus's most-cited item of biographical testimony, naming the author's grandfather (also *Vagbhata*, himself a physician), his father *Simhagupta*, his birthplace *Sindhu*, and his teacher, the Buddhist preceptor *Avalokita*:

A supplementary general web search (not a field-restricted database query) was separately run to verify bibliographic details, confirming a DOI for Jolly's 1907 paper,[6] and stable access links for Hoernle's 1907 reply, [7] and Gode's 1944 paper. [9] Full search terms, filters, and results are reported in the Appendix, as required for review articles.

The Texts and Their Traditional Attribution: The AS and AH share the same six-part architecture but diverge in scale, form, and doctrine (Table 1). The AS, in the mixed prose-verse *champu* (verse interspersed with prose) style of the *Charaka Samhita*, runs to some 150 chapters. The AH is verse throughout across roughly 120 chapters, and even its verse count is unsettled, reported as 7,120, 7,434, or 7,444 depending on edition, a sign the manuscript tradition itself never fully stabilized. [2, 4] The AH survives in a far wider manuscript tradition than the AS, whose prominence in today's curriculum is largely a twentieth-century development. [4]

"My grandfather's name was Vagbhata and he was a physician, I was given his name. My father was Simhagupta. I was born in the country of Sindhu"; and, on training, "Inheriting and acquiring intellectual superiority from my father, the greater guru, after studying under guru Avalokita, after mastering several books on medicine, the 8

divisions of Ayurveda have been properly determined and described (in my book).” [1] This locator has been cross-verified against Bhattacharyya's and Wujastyk's independent discussions of the same passage. [10, 14]

This passage alone establishes at least two *Vagbhatas* in one family before the authorship question is engaged. [1]

This genealogical information is absent from the AH's body text; the 'son of Simhagupta' identification appears only in some printed editions' colophons. Two independent readings, the 1963 article and Hilgenberg and Kirfel's 1941 study as reported by Vogel, suggest these entries may be later scribal additions. [1, 13] Bhattacharyya offers a substantial counter, discussed below.

Even single-author advocates must concede, on the AS's own testimony, a *Vagbhata* lineage of at least two generations; a lost intermediate *Madhya-Samhita* and the alchemical *Rasaratnasamuccaya* further complicate any simple count. [10] The question pursued here is narrower: did one physician in this lineage write either texts, or two distinct hands?

The Case for Two Authors: Palmyr Cordier's 1896 monograph advanced five arguments for AS priority: a title match with the *Kitab Asankar* cited by medieval Arab bibliographers through the translator Ibn Duhn (752-803 CE); the AS's full implementation of the eightfold medical division; its *Charaka*-like prose-verse mixture against the AH's pure verse; AS-unique stanzas surviving in the later *Madhavanidana*; and its silence on mercury (*rasa*), which the AH discusses. [5] Jolly, reviewing this in January 1907, found each argument individually inconclusive, yet retained AS-priority on the AH's own statement of derivation, its archaic idiom, and Buddhist content he read as AS-specific, though Cordier had already located comparable Buddhist invocation in the AH. [6]

Jolly's paper was prompted by a narrower question: which text was I-tsing, whose sojourn in India (671-695 CE) is securely dated, describing when he recorded that “lately a man epitomized the eight arts of which medical science consists, and made them into one bundle,” used by “all

physicians in the five parts of India”?[6] Hoernle replied three months later, opening that Jolly's “treatment tends, quite unintentionally, of course, to confuse the issue.” [7] Hoernle set three conditions: the epitomizer's book had to be recent, an epitome of the eight sections, and standard practice across India. *Sushruta* failed the first; the AH failed the first and third, since in his words, “[AH] cannot well be placed earlier than the eighth century, while Itsing was in India in the latter part of the seventh century.” [7] That left the AS: “The identity of the name of the textbook of Vagbhata the elder with the second of Itsing's conditions is very striking... Ergo: Vagbhata the elder must be the man.” [7] This exchange originates the ‘*Vagbhata I* / *Vagbhata II*’ terminology later used by Keith and Winternitz. [15, 16] Hoernle's fuller 1909 study placed the AH of ‘*Vagbhata II*’ in the ninth century and the AS of ‘*Vagbhata I*’ in an early-seventh-century position, “which by way of distinction calls itself, not a Samhita, but a Samgraha.” [8]

Sharma adds stylistic and doctrinal evidence. The AS is *champu*; the AH is verse throughout, with wider metrical range and denser ornamentation, which the commentator *Jyotishchandra Sarasvati* reads as marking a later literary period, not individual growth. [3] More consequential are checkable disagreements: the AS sets marriageable age at 25/15 (male/female), the AH at 20/16, changes Sharma reads against Manu's figure of 30 as tracking real social change. [3] The texts also disagree on *marma* count and classification: 107 across five categories in the AS, 97 under a revised scheme in the AH that adds *dhamani-marma* (vessel-related vital points), absent from the AS; the AH reclassifies *guda* (the anorectal region) accordingly, noting its scheme differs from what ‘others,’ read by Sharma as the AS's author, have stated. [3] These are checkable divergences consistent with either two authors or one reviser, but they establish some real interval separating the texts.

Religious framing diverges too: the AS invokes the Buddha by name, using an epithet meaning ‘son of the Jina,’ and prescribes Buddhist hymns for mental disorders; the AH's

parallel passages instead favor an epithet invoking Shiva, read by Sarasvati as reflecting different sectarian environments as Buddhist medical patronage waned in North India. [3, 10]

The commentarial record itself divides. *Jejjata*, an early commentator on the *Charaka Samhita* and self-identified pupil of 'Vahata,' cites only the AH, seemingly unaware the AS existed. [3] *Chakrapani* (c. 1060 CE) shows the same pattern. Later readers, *Hemadri*, *Ulhana*, *Vijayarakshita*, *Shrikanthadatta*, *Shivadasasena*, and *Dalhana*, consistently use 'vriddha Vagbhata' (elder Vagbhata) to distinguish the AS's author from the AH's. [3]

The most technically significant evidence is Gode's 1944 finding on *Indu*, the AS's own principal commentator and the single-author school's chief witness. Gode reports *Kinjavadekar's* identification of a quotation within *Indu's* *Shashilekha* commentary as drawn from the AH: "As Pandit Kinjavadekar has identified the above quotation in the A. Hridaya of Vagbhata II we have no doubt that Indu was acquainted with the A. Hridaya." [9] If correct, *Indu*, while commenting on the AS, cites the AH as a separately identifiable authority, difficult to reconcile with treating him as regarding the two works as one. Gode uses this, with a citation traceable to the *Kashika* commentary on *Panini* and a lexicographic quotation via *Kshirasvamin*, to bracket *Indu's* activity to c. 750-1050 CE, concluding *Indu* "flourished after Vagbhata II say after about 900 A.D." [9] This unsettles, rather than confirms, the unity testimony it is elsewhere invoked to support.

The Case for a Single Author: The single-author school's center of gravity is a pair of verses near the AH's close, *Uttarasthana* 40.79-80 and 83, as reported in Sharma's *Vagbhata-vivecana*. [3]

Read at face value, only an author who saw the AS as his own prior work would describe a second text as distilled *amrita* (nectar) from it, "separately produced for the benefit of those of small effort," with verse 83 adding that mastery of the AH equips a physician to understand the AS. [3] *Harishastri Paradkar* states there is "not the slightest

doubt" the two authors are one; *Yadavaji Trikamaji* concurs; *Gananatha Sena* expresses astonishment that any scholar would distinguish them, citing shared language, an identical father's name, and the absence of substantive contradiction. [3]

Nandakishore Sharma, reported in Sharma's monograph, argues the AS's rougher versification reflects a large synthetic compilation, while the AH's polish reflects the same author's mature composition; on this reading, verbatim AS citation within the AH is unremarkable, the missing genealogy in the AH's body text needs no explanation, and apparent contradictions are simply an accumulation of clinical experience. [3] Vidyanath and Singh add a literary parallel: *Kalidasa's* own documented evolution from the *Ritusamhara* to the *Raghuvamsha* shows major within-career shifts are well attested and do not, alone, prove separate authorship. [17]

The strongest single-author evidence is direct testimony from three commentators writing c. 1050-1150 CE. *Indu's* own commentary attributes a view to 'the same author' who elsewhere writes in the AH. [10] *Chandranandana's* mid-eleventh-century commentary repeats, using an emphatic construction, that it is 'thus in the same author's Samgraha. [10] *Arunadatta* (c. 1125-1150 CE) is more explicit still, describing 'this very author of the treatise' as having distinguished the varieties of honey in the *Samgraha*. [10] *Nishchalakara* (c. 1110-1120 CE), a commentator Bhattacharyya calls "very careful about the sources of his statements," uses an unqualified possessive form for material from either text, never distinguishing *vriddha* from *svalpa* (elder from lesser). [10]

Bhattacharyya's 1947 paper is the most systematic single-authorship defense, opening: "We wonder who started the theory that there were as many different authors of the name of Vagbhata as there are different works... All this is quite wrong and unwarranted." [10] His 'four works' are the AS (*vriddha-Vagbhata*), a lost *Madhya-Samhita* (*madhya-Vagbhata*), the AH (*svalpa-Vagbhata*), and the alchemical *Rasaratnasamuccaya* (*rasa-Vagbhata*). [10] His most

detailed evidence is *Nishchalakara's Ratnaprabha*, which cites an AH verse ascribed to: 'by Simhagupta's son, the royal sage Vagbhata, in his own Samhita.' Because this sits within eleventh-century commentary prose, not a colophon, Bhattacharyya argues it cannot be dismissed like the AH's colophon entries elsewhere. [10] He further traces *Tisata* (identified in colophons as 'son of Vagbhata') and his son *Chandrata*, cited by *Chakrapani* c. 1040-50 CE, to propose a single *Vagbhata* active c. 840-890 CE, tentatively linked to the *Pratihara* king *Bhojadeva I of Kanauj*. [10]

Reconsidering the Foundations: One technical point unites both schools: the word *vriddha* itself. Comparative usage, *vriddha-Aryabhata* against *Aryabhata*, the *Vriddha-Gargyasamhita* against the *Gargyasamhita*, shows *vriddha* conventionally marks an enlarged recension against a shorter original, not necessarily a senior author against a junior one. [13] This complicates, without resolving, the popular 'elder versus younger *Vagbhata*' framing.

Vogel's 1965 study offers a third framework: three textual strata, *vriddha*, *madhya*, and *svalpa samhita*, representing successive redactions of one evolving tradition rather than three independent authorial acts; the intermediate reviser "may have been a namesake or even descendant of the great Vagbhata." [13] On this model, textual instability belongs to family-lineage redaction, not to one author's revision or two unrelated authors' independent work.

Vogel also reports Hilgenberg and Kirfel's 1941 German study, whose findings cut against the single-author school's strongest evidence. Comparing both texts against the older *Charaka Samhita*, they found the verse portions of the AS, not its prose, match *Charaka* word for word, reversing the assumption, held by Jolly, that the AS's prose was more archaic. They further showed *Arunadatta's* commentary cites AS verses surviving today only as prose, implying a lost intermediate verse recension consistent with Bhattacharyya's *Madhya-Vagbhata* material. [13, 10] Most consequentially, they argued the epilogue containing the nectar verse is inconsistent with the AH's own prologue, which describes the work as compiled from scattered

sources, not specifically the AS, and identified an unintroduced substitution of *Punarvasu* for *Atreya*; they concluded the epilogue is probably a later interpolation. [13]

The 1963 article reaches the same conclusion independently: "the verse giving the autobiographical information is only found in the text of Astanga Sangraha and not in Astanga Hridaya. In the later work, the same information is added in the form of Colophon, probably, as a later interpolation." [1] Two traditions, German philological and Indian institutional, separated by twenty years, converge on scepticism toward exactly the passage the single-author school treats as decisive.

The Chronological Evidence: I-tsing's account of a recent epitome of the eight branches gives the debate its earliest external anchor, securely dated to 671-695 CE. [6, 7] Whether he meant the AS (Hoernle's reading) or the AH (Gode's 1939 proposal) cannot be settled from the passage alone; [1] either way, the text had achieved standard-practice status within a generation, pushing composition to no later than c. 640-650 CE. [1]

A second anchor comes from Ali ibn Rabban al-Tabari's *Firdaus al-Hikma*, an Arabic medical encyclopedia dated c. 830 CE, which draws material from 'Nidan' and 'Astangahridaya' alongside *Charaka* and *Sushruta*. [1] A Sanskrit text cited by a Baghdad court physician by 830 CE must already have had substantial esteem in India for at least a century before translation, implying an AH composition date no later than the seventh century. [1]

Three further, independent arguments converge more precisely on c. 800 CE as the latest date for the tradition's developed form. Vogel's argument runs through Shantideva's *Bodhicharyavatara* (mid-seventh century). [13] Wujastyk's 1985 paper works through *Ravigupta's Siddhasara*, whose Tibetan translation is linked to *Jinamitra*, datable through the *Mahavyutpatti* lexicon (early ninth century). [14] The third is the Ali ibn Rabban chain above. [1] These three draw on different texts, different scholarly traditions, and different argument types; independent

errors rarely agree by coincidence, so their convergence

carries real weight ([Table 2](#)).

Table 2: Consolidated Dating Table

Proposed date	Basis	Source
Before 4th century CE	I-tsing passage read as referring to <i>Vagbhata I</i> , requiring an earlier terminus post quem	Mukhopadhyaya, cited in JIMH 1963
c. 500 CE (<i>Vagbhata I</i>)	Comparative philological research	P.V. Sharma
500-600 CE	Parallels with Kamasutra, Varahamihira, Arthashastra	Vidyanath and Singh
c. 600 CE (<i>Vagbhata II</i>)	Comparative philological research	P.V. Sharma
c. 625 CE (<i>Vagbhata I</i>)	I-tsing's testimony, read as describing the AS	Hoernle 1907
7th century, at latest	Ali ibn Rabban's citation of the AH, c. 830 CE, implying prior establishment	JIMH 1963
Early 7th c. (<i>Vagbhata I</i>) / 9th c. (<i>Vagbhata II</i>)	I-tsing chronology plus comparative reading against the Navanitaka and Bheda Samhita	Hoernle 1909
Not later than c. 800 CE	Three independent termini ante quem (Bodhicharyavatara; Ravigupta/Jinamitra; Ali ibn Rabban)	Vogel 1965; Wujastyk 1985; JIMH 1963
9th century (single Vagbhata, c. 840-890 CE)	<i>Tisata-Chandrata-Chakrapani</i> genealogical chain; 12-armed <i>Avalokiteshvara</i> iconography	Bhattacharyya 1947

Bhattacharyya's ninth-century single-author dating rests on the *Tisata-Chandrata-Chakrapani* chain, reinforced by a twelve-armed *Avalokiteshvara* reference in the AS he reads as evidence of Tantric Buddhist iconography not established before c. 800 CE. [10] That dating sits in tension with the convergent c. 800 CE terminus: if the AH's developed form is independently constrained to no later than 800 CE by three unrelated chains, a single author active as late as 840-890 CE cannot easily be the sole hand behind both texts unless one chain itself needs revision. Bhattacharyya's 1947 paper predates Vogel and Wujastyk and does not engage the Ali ibn Rabban evidence; this tension remains unreconciled in the literature.

3. DISCUSSION

Weighing this evidence means setting explicit commentarial testimony against internal textual-critical, doctrinal, and chronological argument.

First, the nectar verse, the single-author school's strongest evidence, is exactly what two independent textual-critical traditions flag as a probable interpolation. Bhattacharyya's counter, *Nishchalakara's* ascription of the AH to 'Simhagupta's son, the royal sage Vagbhata,' sits in

commentary prose rather than a colophon and is hard to dismiss on the same grounds. Even so, the single most quotable proof-text for unity rests on ground specialist philology regards as unstable.

Second, the commentarial unity testimony itself, *Indu*, *Chandranandana*, *Arunadatta*, and *Nishchalakara* writing c. 1050-1150 CE, is explicit and cannot be waved away. But Sharma's three-stage model, an early period citing only the AH, a middle period reading both texts synoptically and producing today's confident unity statements, and a later period returning to the *vridhha* distinction from *Hemadri* onward, explains this same testimony without declaring any commentator careless.

Third, Gode's finding sharpens rather than resolves this: *Indu*, the single-author school's own star witness, cites the AH as a separately identifiable authority while commenting on the AS. His testimony is at least as compatible with Vogel's recensional model as with strict single authorship.

Fourth, on chronology, three independent citation chains converging on c. 800 CE is the strongest single finding of this review, precisely because the chains share no common

source of error. Bhattacharyya's ninth-century chronology requires all three to be wrong simultaneously.

On balance, the cumulative weight of textual-critical, doctrinal, sectarian, and chronological evidence tilts toward the AS and AH being the work of two related but distinct authors, most likely within a single teaching or family lineage, rather than one uniform career. This is a considered judgment, not a settled fact: the single-author school's commentarial testimony is real, and no verse-level claim here has been checked against a primary manuscript witness earlier than the interpolation Hilgenberg and Kirfel identify. Meulenbeld's "far from solved" remains the most honest summary available.

4. CONCLUSION

On the balance of the evidence assembled here, this review concludes that the Astangasamgraha and the Astangahridayasamhita are the work of two related authors rather than one. That conclusion rests on three converging lines of evidence, not a single decisive proof. The nectar verse, the single-author school's strongest textual claim, is independently flagged as a probable interpolation by two unrelated lines of textual criticism working twenty years apart. Gode's 1944 finding that Indu, the AS's own principal commentator, cites the AH as a separately identifiable authority undercuts the very commentarial unity the single-author position depends on. And Sharma's three-stage historiographical model explains the shifting terminology across the commentarial record more economically than either extreme position can alone.

Three chronological findings support this reading without depending on it. Three independent citation chains converge on approximately 800 CE as the latest date for the tradition's developed form. I-tsing's testimony from 671-695 CE sets an earlier terminus for whichever text he described, most plausibly the AS. The resulting sixth-to-seventh-century compositional window sits in real tension with Bhattacharyya's ninth-century single-author chronology, which would require all three independent chains to be wrong at once.

This is a considered judgment, reached by weighing the totality of the evidence, not a claim that the question is closed. The single-authorship position remains a live scholarly alternative: Nishchalakara's ascription of the AH to Simhagupta's son sits inside eleventh-century commentary prose rather than a colophon, and cannot be dismissed by the reasoning used to discount the AH's own colophon entries elsewhere. A live alternative, though, is not an equally weighted one, and on the evidence gathered here, the weight tips toward two authors. Resolution beyond that requires either computational stylometric comparison of the two texts' Sanskrit, for which the CCRAS APTA Digital Library now offers a genuinely searchable corpus, or the discovery of a manuscript witness to the AH predating the Hilgenberg-Kirfel interpolation. Until either happens, this review's position stands: two related authors, not one, held on the weight of evidence assembled here, and open to revision only by evidence of the same rigor that produced it.

Abbreviations

AS: *Astangasamgraha*. ; AH: *Astangahridayasamhita*. ; CE: Common Era.

CCRAS: Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences.

NIIMH: National Institute of Indian Medical Heritage.

AYUSH: Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy.

APTA: Authoritative Principal Textbooks of Ayurveda (digital library maintained by CCRAS).

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APPENDIX:

Search Strategy

PubMed and Scopus were queried using the Boolean strategy specified;
both returned zero results, consistent with this review's core primary

sources sitting in Orientalist/Indology journals outside biomedical
database coverage (see Material & Methods for discussion).

Table 3: Search Strategy Used for Identifying Relevant Literature

Database	Search Terms Used	Filters Applied	Results	Notes
PubMed	("Vagbhata"[tiab] OR "Vagbhata"[tiab] OR "Vagbhat"[tiab]) AND ("Astanga Sangraha"[tiab] OR "Astanga Samgraha"[tiab] OR "Astangasamgraha"[tiab] OR "Ashtanga Sangraha"[tiab] OR "Ashtanga Samgraha"[tiab] OR "Astanga Hridaya"[tiab] OR "Astangahridaya"[tiab] OR "Ashtanga Hridaya"[tiab] OR "Astanga Hridayam"[tiab] OR "Brihat Trayi"[tiab]) AND (authorship[tiab] OR "single author"[tiab] OR "two authors"[tiab] OR chronology[tiab] OR dating[tiab] OR date[tiab])	Article type: Journal Article, Review; Language: English; No date restriction	0	Core primary sources (1896-1965 Orientalist journals) fall outside PubMed's biomedical scope
Scopus	TITLE-ABS-KEY(("Vagbhata" OR "Vagbhata" OR "Vagbhat") AND ("Astanga Sangraha" OR "Astanga Samgraha" OR "Astangasamgraha" OR "Ashtanga Sangraha" OR "Ashtanga Samgraha" OR "Astanga Hridaya" OR "Astangahridaya" OR "Ashtanga Hridaya" OR "Astanga Hridayam" OR "Brihat Trayi") AND (authorship OR "single author" OR "two authors" OR chronology OR dating OR date))	Document type: Article, Review; Language: English; Subject area: Medicine and Arts and Humanities; No date restriction	0	No indexed records under these terms
General web search (supplementary; not a bibliographic database)	'Vagbhata authorship Astangasamgraha Astangahridaya one author or two debate'; 'Hoernle Jolly Itsing Vagbhata 1907 Journal Royal Asiatic Society'; 'Hoernle "Itsing and Vagbhata" 1907 April doi.org'; 'Bhattacharyya "Date and works of Vagbhata" Annals Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute'	Relevance ranking only; no database-specific filters available	Multiple	Used only to verify bibliographic details (DOIs, stable links) of sources already identified via direct primary-source reading, not for source discovery; run 6 August 2026