In Babylonian astronomical literature of the Seleucid period, the five planets are enumerated in the following sequence: cipher. The same sequence is found in many astrological texts of the period, notably in the horoscopes. This arrangement has nothing to do with a spatial arrangement of the planets in the cosmos, in contrast to the following planetary arrangement in Greek astronomy and astrology: cipher. The Greek model represents the order of the planets in depth according to their periods of sidereal rotation. No such “natural” explanation can be offered for the Babylonian sequence.

Boll noted the parallelism between an older (Neo-Babylonian) arrangement of planets—cipher—and a Greek astrological doctrine of “terms” (ὁρία), or sections of zodiacal signs associated with planets, attributed to “Chaldeans” in the Tetrabiblos I, 21, 12–19. But an explanation of the standard Seleucid enumeration of planets in terms of astrological doctrine was rejected by Neugebauer for lack of cuneiform sources to document the existence of such a doctrine. Pingree, however, assumed the connection between the Babylonian sequence and astrology, and identified it with the attribution of benefic and malefic status to the planets, a theory well entrenched and abundantly documented in Hellenistic Greek (and Indian) astrology. I present, in what follows, evidence from a Seleucid Babylonian astrological text, which leaves little doubt that a theory of benefic and malefic planets,

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1 This sequence was discovered by F. Boll; see Paulys Realencyklopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft 14 (1912) 2561 sub b, and id., “Zur babylonischen Planetenordnung,” ZA 25 (1911), pp. 372–377, and “Neues zur babylonischen Planetenordnung,” ZA 28 (1913), pp. 350–51.
2 See BH for horoscope texts.
3 See Boll, Paulys Realencyklopädie 14 (1912) 2561–64.
similar in its main outlines to that in Hellenistic astrology, underlies the sequence in which the planets are enumerated in both Babylonian astrology and astronomy.

Explicit reference to the benefic and malefic natures of the planets in Babylonian astrology is provided in TCL 6 13, a Seleucid tablet from Uruk. The relevant lines (obv. ii 1–4) are quoted below. Sachs drew attention to this particular section of TCL 6 13 since it closely parallels a number of nativity omens in TCL 6 14, which he discussed, and further parallels are to be noted in a horoscope as well.

TCL 6 13 ii

2 DIŠ dGU4.UD qar-da-àt e-tel-let e-mu-qan pu-ug-lu DIŠ 4[Sat-bat-a-nu pít-tu-us na-an-ziq ka]-[an-tu-su]
3 DIŠ dSAG.UŠ MI.MI dal-øat GIG-at u si-qát
4 DIŠ d30 ZALÁG-àt SIG5 ki-na-at u GÍD.DA//DIŠ AN.GE6 30 ek-let dal-øat NU ZALÁG-àt KIN NU GI DIŠ AN.GE6 20 par-sat pár-da-<at>

Judging by the parallels, the protasis of TCL 6 13 has been abbreviated to DIŠ planet x, “if planet such-and-such,” from an originally longer version, “if a child is born when planet such-and-such comes forth.” The apodosis contains a series of feminine statives describing the “sign” (ittu), although no birth is mentioned in the abbreviated

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6 For the edition of this text, see above, Chapter Five.
7 Sachs, “Babylonian Horoscopes,” pp. 73–74; parallels found in TCL 6 14 obv. 19–33, see below, note 10.
8 MLC 2190 (dated to –234) and below, note 10.
9 Cf. TCL 6 14:27–38, see JCS 6 (1952), p. 66.
10 The first statement, namely DIŠ MUL.SAG.ME.GAR followed by two feminine statives and an omen apodosis, can be seen elsewhere in astrological texts in a fuller form. The passage can be identified in nativity omens, TCL 6 14:29, see Sachs, “Babylonian Horoscopes,” p. 66 (translation of Sachs is quoted here): [LÚ.TUR a-lid-ma 4SAG.ME.GAR E-a GI-àt DI-àt NÍG.TUK SUMUN-bar U4 GÍD.DA, “If a child is born when Jupiter has come forth: regular, well, he will become rich, he will grow old, (his) days will be long,” and in a horoscope for the year –234, MLC 2190: 7f., see “Babylonian Horoscopes,” p. 60 (translation Sachs): [KI MUL.BABBAR GI-àt DI-àt NÍG.TUK SUMUN-bar U1.MES GÍD.DA.MES, “Place of Jupiter: regular, well, riches, he will grow old, (his) days will be long.” The text in question (TCL 6 13) is clearly a repetition of the same omen, which associates Jupiter with particular predictions. The subject of the stative verbs seems to have been lost by ellipsis, but it should