

Does δίανοια in Mk 12:30 mean “Gemüt” and ἔχομεν in 1 Jn 5:15 “schon gehabt haben”?

The question has been raised by someone whether the German translation of δίανοια in Mk 12:30 as “Gemüt” and the rendition of ἔχομεν in 1 Jn 5:15 as “schon gehabt haben” or “unsere Bitten schon erfüllt hat” are correct. Some of the main German translations render Mk 12:30 as follows: Revised Luther: “von ganzem Herzen, von ganzer Seele, von ganzem Gemüt und von allen deinen Kräften”. Elberfelder: “aus deinem ganzen Herzen, und aus deiner ganzen Seele und aus deinem ganzen Verstand und aus deiner ganzen Kraft”. Einheitsübersetzung: “mit ganzem Herzen und ganzer Seele, mit all deinen Gedanken und all deiner Kraft”.

The Hebrew text of Dt 6:4-5, from which this text is quoted, has only the words about “heart”, “soul”, and “power”. The words printed in blue are not found in the Dt text. The same goes for the OT translation called Septuagint. The word about “Gemüt/Gedanken” is an addition in Mt 22:37 = Mk 12:30 = Lk 10:27.

The meaning of “heart” and “soul” is pretty clear. The meaning of “power/strength” is not so clear. The rabbis interpreted it as “wealth”. This seems to be an appropriate interpretation, inasmuch as it would imply that the faithful love God with heart, soul, and their economical means (i.e. giving), that is, love to God has practical applications.

The Hellenic word, which the Revised Luther translates with “Gemüt”, here and in a number of other places has the sense of “the faculty of thinking, comprehending and reasoning: in other words, it means understanding, intelligence, mind”.

German ‘Gemüt’ has most of the time the sense of “mind

(in relation to feelings rather than ideas)”: e.g. “er hat ein kindliches Gemüt”. The word expresses also “the emotional make-up”, “emotional nature”, “disposition”, “temperament”, etc. as well as the idea of “warmth of character”, “feeling”, “heart”, “inner”, etc. However, its primary sense is Mind, mentality, e.g. “Leib und Gemüt” or “Gemüt und Verstand”. Here, at Mk 12:15, it means Mind, Mentality, Intellect. Evidently, this is the sense in which Revised Luther translates it. This would seem to correspond well with the meaning of the original. Elberfelder uses “Verstand”, which is quite good. It is similar to Rev. Luther. On the other hand, the Eiheitsübersetzung has chosen to express not the faculty of thinking, but the results of the action of the faculty of thinking: “thoughts” (= Gedanken). In some texts, the Hellenic word, too, has the sense of “Gedanken” (= thoughts), e.g. Lk 1:51.

With respect to the second text, 1 Jn 5:15, the following may be said: Rev. Luther: “Und wenn wir wissen, daß er uns hört, worum wir auch bitten, so wissen wir, daß wir erhalten, was wir von ihm erbeten haben”. Elberfelder: “Und wenn wir wissen, daß er uns hört, was wir auch bitten, so wissen wir, daß wir das Erbetene haben, das wir von ihm erbeten haben”. Eiheitsübersetzung: “Wenn wir wissen, daß er uns bei allem hört, was wir erbitten, dann wissen wir auch, daß er unsere Bitten schon erfüllt hat”. Rev. Luther and Elberfelder are in agreement, although they use different verbs.

Both of them use the present tense: “erhalten” and “haben” respectively. The Eiheitsübersetzung has understood the text differently: “schon erfüllt hat”, i.e. they use the perfect tense, that is they understand that the action has already taken place.

The Hellenic text uses the present (ἔχομεν échomen) = “**we have**”. The problem here is that this verb in this particular tense can express more than just the present idea of “we have”. Sometimes it can have a future sense. For example, it is used in 2 Cor 5:1: “We know that if our earthly house of [this]

tabernacle is destroyed, **we have** (ἔχομεν) a building from God, a house made without hands, eternal in the heavens”. Here, Paul speaks about death. This is the sense of “our earthly house of this tabernacle [= body] is destroyed”. When this happens, “we have a building from God”, i.e. a new, heavenly body, etc. In this text the meaning is not perfective “schon gehabt haben”, it is not even present, because the whole thing is something that lies in the **future**. Death is a future event, so we cannot already have received the heavenly body; first we must die before we can get the new, heavenly body.

In 1 Jn 5:15 the logical order is first the prayer and then the receiving of the answer. Thus, the text cannot mean that “we already have received the answer”. The reason why he does not use the future – as he should – is that he wants to emphasize the certainty of the receiving of the answer. The present (“we have”) is stronger than the future (“we shall have”). That is why he uses the present. We have a similar text in Mk 11:24: “All that you pray and ask for, believe that you [have] **received** them, and they will be yours”. The past tense is only to emphasize the certainty, as though we had already received the answer to the prayer. The text should be translated with a present: “you [will] receive them, and you will have them”.

Thus, I would say that the Einheitsübersetzung has tried to express this idea of certainty by translating with “schon erfüllt hat”, which amounts to “schon gehabt haben”, as if we already have it in our hand. However, although we miss something of the original (the sense of certainty), it is better to translate it with a present (which here must be understood as future). Thus, the first two translations are more correct.