PLOTLearner

- **taught by the Hebrew Bible in the Majority World**
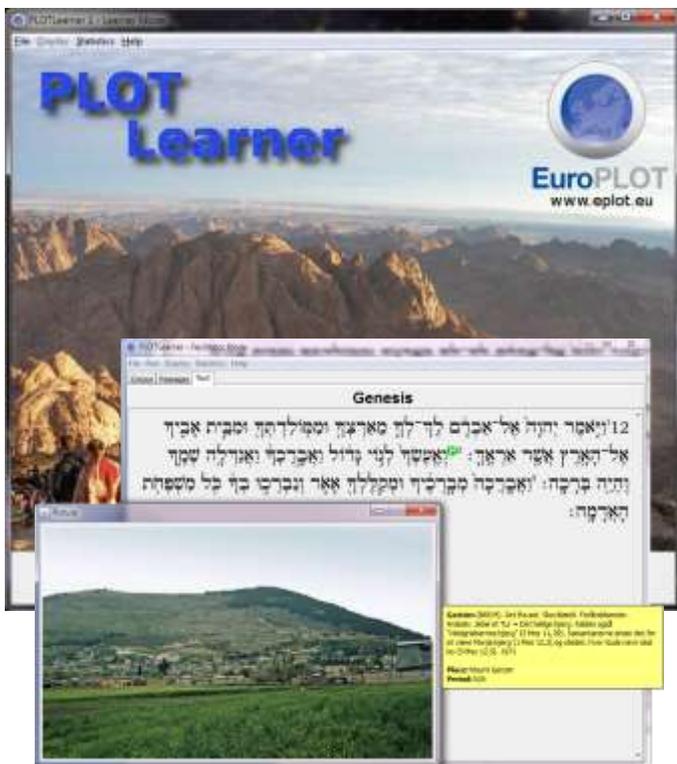
Nicolai Winther-Nielsen December 23, 2013

The Europe Union project EuroPLOT (=www.eplot.eu) finished its work in 2013 and achieved its goals. The project released PLOTLearner, a free Windows program for learning languages from text-databases. The program can now freely be downloaded and installed on a PC, and it will empower and motivate students to explore the texts and train skills from the texts.

PLOTLearner offers a learning environment for Biblical Hebrew, using one of the world's best databases of the Hebrew Bible as the pedagogical tutor of the learner. The new learning technology has been tested thoroughly in Denmark, Sweden and Madagascar. It now also exists in an online version accessible through the internet. An adaptable course on introductory Biblical Hebrew can be used online or installed on the computer from the internet and distributed on USB-sticks.

Through interactive and pedagogical exposure to the Hebrew texts, the the learner is gradually being guided into learning the language from the texts. The text of the Bible can also find resources for learning in videos or images that are relevant to the text.

It was developed to work for language learning driven by the Hebrew Bible, but can also work for Greek and for other languages.
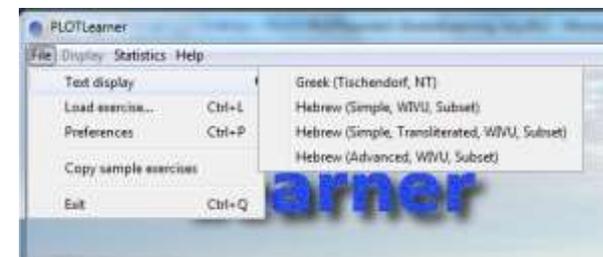
Learning through the Hebrew Bible

PLOTLearner motivates the learner to study the text and practice his or her knowledge of the language and to reflect on the progress made so far. The program uses a database of the Hebrew Bible for tutoring and it automatically searches for online resources offered by teachers, such as documents, pictures and videos developed to enhance learning.

Through the interface learners select the Hebrew text or a transliterated version, or they select the Greek New Testament.

The program enables the learner to

- **engage with the Hebrew Bible** interactively exploring the structure of the text and the words, phrases and clauses

- **learn and memorize** through resources delivered with the program or adapted to students in videos, pictures and documents..

- **practice skills** in reading, writing, morphology and syntax to achieve proficiency.

The program thus functions as a tutor which provides feedback and plots the learning outcomes.

Majority World Teaching

PLOTLearner aspires to be the best free technology for language learning globally. This cutting edge learning technology can be adapted to any local needs and teachers can translate it into local languages and develop their own course material. Furthermore, the program can easily support any kind of learning which uses the Biblical text for interpretation.

To implement this technology in an institution or educational system, we recommend training of Hebrew teachers in a Two Week Intensive PLOTLearner Course. After the course, we can offer access to an online community for teachers as well as supervision online by Skype or in mail. This is a promising way to introduce new learning methods in institutions without sufficient printed books and commercial programs.

Our approach has stood the test in an African context without internet. In a Danmission EuroPLOT project in Madagascar we used older Windows computers and delivered programs, videos and old Word 97-2003 documents on USB-sticks. Students learn and practice in groups of 10 sharing one second-hand stationary PC. Teachers trained to use PLOTLearner are now adapting the tool to their classes at five of the seminaries of the Lutheran Church of Madagascar. We expect that PLOTLearner will transform the educational system and raise the knowledge of the Hebrew Bible significantly among pastors. The program will have a considerable impact on the admittance of students at the graduate school of the church.

In 2014, linguist Dr Randall Tan, Global Bible Initiative (was Asia Bible Society), will use the program at Malaysia Baptist Theological Seminary, exploring its adaptability to Asian learners. With Dr Sarah Zhang and others we explore whether we will be feasible to translate PLOTLearner into Chinese

We will track the performance of learners online on our Learning Journey site. We will be able to produce evidence on the leaning outcomes of individual students from the majority world, and they will be useful for learners who need to document their skills when they apply for grants to study abroad. The Learning Journey Online will also help teachers improve their supervision of students.

There is not yet any funding for implementation of this new kind of learning in other African countries. However, PLOTLearner has been presented in Addis Abeba and Nairobi and interest has been indicated.

A global opportunity

We believe that PLOTLearner is a viable option for global teaching of Biblical Studies. However, even the best technology may fail, despite being given away for free!

PLOTLearner has great potential for institutions and individuals looking for first rate affordable technology for learning which is pedagogical:

- **FREE LICENSE:** *The Hebrew text database is offered free of charge!* The German Bible Society is the leading publisher of scientific editions of the Biblical languages. It kindly offers a license for free access to 20% of their commercial database of the Hebrew Bible. Through national Bible societies institutions can apply for access to the entire Hebrew Bible.

- **BEST DATA:** *PLOTLearner uses the best Academic database in the World today!* The program uses the database of the Eep Talstra Center for Bible and Computing at the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam (http://wivu.dans.knaw.nl/). It contains pioneer results from 35 years of research on texts and programs for studies in the language and text of the Hebrew Bible.

- **ADVANCED PEDAGOGY:** *EuroPLOT has developed a new persuasive learning!* The Europe Union project has develop and tested new revolutionary ideas for "persuasive learning." PLOTLearner is a self-tutoring text which simplifies learning and motivates the learner. PLOT Learner is built to help teachers adapt their teaching to the needs of their classes, and learners can study on their own. It will also be possible to share course material in an online community of teachers.

We have learned that PLOTLeaner will only be used, if teachers adapt it for their own teaching in class. We therefore hope that teachers in the majority world will want to learn how to use the tool in learner-centered instruction and we want teachers in North America and Europe to collaborate in an online-community. We could help each other in a global community to create free resources to replace the copyrighted textbooks or software that majority learners can only dream about. These persuasive learning objects could rewritten and translated into any language..

More Information

At present PLOTLearner is developed and maintained on a private basis by the programmer and the work package leader of EuroPLOT, but we are seeking collaboration and projects. We hope you will follow us in the future!

- Look at online information at http://bh.3bmoodle.dk/
- Do not hesitate to contact Professor of Hebrew Bible and ICT, Nicolai Winther-Nielsen (nwn@dbi.edu)