

## Curriculum Vitae

Itai Roffman, PhD



### Personal details

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*Languages:* Hebrew, English, French (partial)

### Biography

Itai Roffman, an evolutionary anthropologist, is a lecturer and researcher at the Yezreel Valley College, Israel. In 2017 he was awarded a PhD for his dissertation entitled: "Studying Suite of Early-Hominin Traits in *Pan*: Cultural and Behavioral Evidence in Support of their Reclassification as Early-Hominins", under the supervision of evolutionist Prof. Eviatar Nevo, and paleontologist/archeologist Prof. Avraham Ronen. Itai received his MA in physical/biological anthropology from Iowa State University, USA (thesis titled: "Are bicultural bonobos able to recognize iconic representations and produce referential signs in human cultural terms?"). His MA thesis research focused on examining the iconographic competencies of bonobos as a way of studying the close cultural links between *Pan* and humans by comparing their abilities to that of late *Homo* cave art representational iconography and mark making. There he empirically proved language-competent bonobos ability to produce iconographic mark-making and to remember their respective meanings across time along with interpreting meaning of hieroglyphic type icons. His PhD dissertation research was a continuation of that study. Its ultimate goal was to demonstrate that early *Homo* and chimpanzees' tool production and use competencies are based on the shared ancestry of these two hominin sister species. Roffman further demonstrated the competency of bilateral informational-exchange of chimpanzees/bonobos with humans in terms of miming, music and vocal control implicating protolanguage in hominin evolution. Other traits observed were alliance building, cultural/group/personal identity, responsibility and moral order along with giving testimony of past events. Itai has successfully identified strategies for resource procurement in captive and semi-captive bonobo-chimpanzees (*Pan paniscus*) in Europe and America, exemplified by their stone/wood and bone tool preparation and processing competencies, to the level of pre-agricultural extractive foraging. Moreover, he has established a field site in Mali, west Africa, to study wild chimpanzee survival strategies, cultural diversity and adaptations to arid multi-habitat cliff range environments.

For his unique research Itai was awarded the Adams Fellowship for Doctoral Students, of The Israel National Academy of Sciences and Humanities. In addition to his scientific work, Itai is active in the advancement of chimpanzee liberation and sanctuary rights for cultural rehabilitation to fulfill their hominin/early *Homo* potential in open natural reservations. As part of this effort, he founded the "Israeli Chimpanzee Welfare & Personhood Association" and the "Mali Chimpanzee Cultural Preservation, Rehabilitation and Heritage League" (dedicated to establishing reservations for chimpanzees and promoting their right of *habeas corpus* and reclassification as early hominin members of the *Homo* genus). Furthermore, he started an initiative to help mentally/communication disabled children to express themselves through intelligent bilateral video-assisted informational exchange sessions with bonobo-chimpanzees, who competently converse using computer keyboard English Lexigram symbols.

In the past Roffman led "Roots & Shoots" (the Jane Goodall Institute) Peace making programs between Jews and Arabs in Israel and the Palestinian territories, and at the Syrian Rajar village (situated half in Lebanon and half in Israel) through humanitarian educational projects for children and youth, promoting equality and acceptance of those who are different in society, mainly via chimpanzee sister-species awareness raising. Itai is currently establishing the Jane Goodall Institute Israel at the Yezreel Valley College. In 2005 Roffman was presented with the Dr. James Gillihan Award for Peacemaking - Honoring at TEAM (Teachers of Experiential and Adventure Methodologies), Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, Illinois.

### **Education**

1986-1992: Elementary education, Rockville, Maryland, USA.

1992-2001: Elementary and High-school, Herzliya, Israel.

2002-2005: BA in Multidisciplinary Studies (History & Arts), Tel-Hai Academic College, Tel-Hai, Israel.

2006-2008: MA in physical/biological anthropology, Iowa State University, USA. Under the supervision of cognitive psychologist and linguist Dr. Sue Savage-Rumbaugh, symbologist Prof. Lisa Fontaine and anthropologist Prof. Jill Pruetz.

Thesis entitled: "Are bicultural bonobos able to recognize iconic representations and produce referential signs in human cultural terms?".

2009-2016: PhD in Evolutionary Anthropology, Haifa University, Israel. Under the supervision of evolutionist Prof. Eviatar Nevo and paleontologist/archeologist Prof. Avraham Ronen.

Dissertation entitled: "Studying Suite of Early-Hominin Traits in *Pan*: Cultural and Behavioral Evidence in Support of their Reclassification as Early-Hominins".

Sep 2016 - 2017: Post-doctoral fellow, The Graduate Studies Authority; The International Center for Advanced Studies in Evolution, Haifa University, Israel.

### **Current Occupation**

August 2018 - present: Lecturer and Researcher, Yezreel Valley College, Israel

<https://www.yvc.ac.il/en/>

### **Research**

2006-2008: Language Competent Bonobo Iconography - MA thesis Research, The Great Ape Trust of Iowa, USA.

2009-2016: Studying Suite of early Hominin Traits in *Pan* - PhD thesis research, Haifa University, Haifa, Israel.

2010: Informational-exchange research, Wales Ape & Monkey Sanctuary, UK (May).

2010-2011: Bonobo tool use and food processing research, Wuppertal Zoo, Germany (October-January).

2011: Hominin-type tool use and food processing research in bonobos, Great Ape Trust of Iowa, USA (June-August).

2013: Chimpanzee field research expedition, Parc National du Kouroufing et Wongo, Mali (June).

2014: Chimpanzee cultural research, Mt. Kouloubalonda, Mali, and National Zoo of Mali, Bamako (February-April).

2017: Chimpanzee protection contract signing by villages, Mt. Kouloubalonda, Mali, and rehabilitation of chimpanzees at the National Zoo of Mali, Bamako (March-May).  
2019: Establishing a chimpanzee cultural rehabilitation sanctuary at Zoo National du Mali (Bamako, Mali).  
2019: Planting 500 medicinal/fruit trees for the chimpanzee accord tribal villages (with gift of 150 mosquito nets), Mt. Kouloubalonda, Mali, and sanctuary rehabilitation of chimpanzees at the National Zoo of Mali, Bamako (Sept-Oct).  
2020: Field research at Mt. Kouloubalonda, Mali (Feb)

### **Appointments**

2015: Reviewer in the Israel Journal of Ecology & Evolution  
2017: Reviewer for the National Geographic Society research grant proposals  
2019-present: the Great Ape Project Delegate and Scientific Advisor for Israel & Mali  
2020: Committee member (board of directors) of the World Biological Corridor

### **Lectures (partial list)**

2007: "*Do cross-fostered chimpanzees and bonobos possess representational symbology and recognizable imagery in human cultural terms?*", The Jane Goodall Institute Chimpanzee Conference, Sedgwick County Zoo, Wichita, Kansas (October 10, presentation and panel).  
2010: Maimonides Article Lecture, Sheba Tel Ha-Shomer Hospital, Maccabi Health Centre, Ramat-Gan, Israel.  
2010-2017: Multiple departmental lectures, including lectures in academic courses, at Haifa University and at other academic institutions in Israel and abroad.  
2011: "*Early Homo suite of traits in chimpanzees*", Judaism In Evolutionary Perspective Conference, Schechter Institute for Jewish Studies, Jerusalem (November 17).  
2012: "*Studying Suite of Early Homo traits in Pan*", Adams Conference, the Israel National Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Jerusalem (January 8).  
2014: Israel National Academy of Sciences and Humanities annual Tu-Bishvat Party lecture (January 13).  
2018: Seminar "Studying Suite of Early-Hominin Traits in *Pan*: Cultural and Behavioral Evidence in Support of *Pan*'s Reclassification as Early-Hominins". EEB Behavior Group, Department of Ecology, Evolution and Behavior, University of Minnesota (February 23).  
2018: Seminar Presentation "Gestural Communication and Pantomime in Great Apes (*Pan* genus)". Department of Comparative Literature, Cornell University (March 6).  
2018: Mali chimpanzees as an extant model for early hominin evolution. The Center for Sustainability, Achva Academic College (May 21).  
2018: Mali chimpanzees as an extant model for early hominin evolution. The Green Forum of the Yesh Atid party on World Environment Day, the Knesset, Jerusalem (June 5).  
2019: Interspecies Internet Workshop at MIT's Center for Bits and Atoms, Cambridge, MA, USA (July 15, presentation and panel) <http://cba.mit.edu/events/19.07.12/>  
2020: The World Biological Corridor Project of the Government of the Canary Islands Conference (October 23, presentation and panel via zoom).

### **Media**

2004-2017: multiple news reports and articles (internet, newspaper, radio, TV)  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/13545371731/?fref=ts>  
<http://adams.academy.ac.il/he/fellow/itai-roffman/>  
2018: <http://as.cornell.edu/news/ape-communication-explored-cornell-event>

2019: Nature Briefings chose our chimpanzee manifesto *as quote of the day* for July 29, 2019 (<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-019-02330-z>)

### **National Service**

2003-2005: Youth leadership and peace program in Rajar Village, northern Israel (Roots & Shoots, the Jane Goodall Institute).

2009-2010: Protecting farms from burglaries at Moshav Kerem Maharal and Yilelat Hatan farm, Mt. Carmel, northern Israel.

### **Honors and Awards** (including Memberships in Professional Societies)

2005: The Dr. James Gillihan Award for Peacemaking - honoring at TEAM (Teachers of Experiential and Adventure Methodologies), Northeastern Illinois University, Chicago, Illinois.

2005: Member of the Microsoft Office Information Worker Board of the Future, Budapest, Hungary (June 19-23).

2008: "Outstanding Youth Leadership" invitation awarded to attend the Jane Goodall Global Youth Summit, Walt Disney World Resort, Orlando, Florida (April 19-25).

2013: "Human Evolution - Past Present and Future Anthropological, Medical and Nutritional Considerations", London, UK - 1<sup>st</sup> prize for scientific research poster presentation, awarded by Sir. David Attenborough (May 8-10).

2016: Adams Conference - 1<sup>st</sup> prize for scientific research poster presentation, awarded by the Adams Fellowship for Doctoral Students, the Israel National Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Jerusalem, Israel (January 19).

### **Research Grants**

2016-2017: The Prince Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, Abu-Dhabi, UAE.

Project title: "Ensuring Survival of the Endangered Mali Chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes verus*): Development of Sustainable Strategies for their Coexistence with Humans".

2016-2017: Primate Conservation Inc., Rhode Island, USA. Action fund grant: "Ensuring Survival of the Endangered Mali Chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes verus*): Development of Sustainable Strategies for their Coexistence with Humans".

2018-2020: The Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation, Los Angeles, California, USA. Project title: "Mali Chimpanzee cultural diversity research and conservation; habitat and viability assessment " (under the auspices of the Jane Goodall Institute).

2018-2019: The Prince Mohamed bin Zayed Species Conservation Fund, Abu-Dhabi, UAE.

Project title: "Ensuring Survival of the Endangered Mali Chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes verus*): Development of Sustainable Strategies for their Coexistence with Humans".

### **Fellowships**

2006-2008: 2 years full scholarship for Masters in Anthropology, Iowa State University, awarded by Great Ape Trust of Iowa.

2010-2014: The Adams Fellowship for Doctoral Students, the Israel National Academy of Sciences and Humanities, Jerusalem, Israel.

### **Board membership**

2012-2013: Bonobo Hope Sanctuary (BHS) IACUC board member.

2012-present: Bonobo Hope Sanctuary (BHS) board of directors member.

2019-present: the Great Ape Project Spain board member.

2020: Committee member (board of directors) of the World Biological Corridor.

## Publications

1. **Roffman I** (2008). Masters Thesis in Anthropology: "Are bicultural bonobos able to recognize iconic representations and produce referential signs in human cultural terms?" *Iowa State University, Department of Anthropology*. DOI: [10.13140/RG.2.2.15790.36168](https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.15790.36168)
2. **Roffman I** and Nevo E (2010). Can Chimpanzee Biology Highlight Human Origin and Evolution? *Rambam Maimonides Med J*. 1(1):e0009.  
Main article:  
<http://www.rmmj.org.il/userimages/10/0/PublishFiles/10Article.pdf>  
Supplementary material:  
<http://www.rmmj.org.il/userimages/10/0/PublishFiles/10ArticleAM.pdf>
3. **Roffman I**, Savage-Rumbaugh S, Rubert-Pugh E, Ronen A, and Nevo E (2012). Stone tool production and utilization by bonobo-chimpanzees (*Pan paniscus*). *Proc Natl Acad Sci USA* 109: 14500-14503.
4. **Roffman I**, Savage-Rumbaugh S, Rubert-Pugh E, Stadler A, Ronen A, & Nevo E (2015). Preparation and Use of Varied Natural Tools for Extractive Foraging by Bonobos (*Pan paniscus*). *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 158 (1): 78-91.
5. **Roffman I**, Peleg G, Stadler A, Nevo E (2015). Meaningful informational exchange and pantomime in chimpanzees and bonobos: implications for protolanguage in hominins. *Human Evolution* 30(3-4): 141-174. DOI: 10.14673/HE2015341007
6. **Roffman I** (2016). PhD Dissertation in Evolutionary Anthropology: "Studying Suite of Early-Hominin Traits in *Pan*: Cultural and Behavioral Evidence in Support of their Reclassification as Early-Hominins". The Graduate Studies Authority, University of Haifa, Israel.
7. Rumbaugh ES, **Roffman I**, Pugh E, Rumbaugh DM (2016). 16. Ethical methods of investigation with *Pan/Homo* bonobos and chimpanzees. In: *Biocommunication: Sign-Mediated Interactions between Cells and Organisms*. Eds.: J. Seckbach & R. Gordon. London, World Scientific Publishing: 449-572.
8. **Roffman I**, Panchevre M, Ronen A, and Nevo E (2016). Cultural and Physical Characterization of Near-Arid Savanna Chimpanzees in Mali. *Human Evolution* 31(4): 191-214.
9. **Roffman I**, Mizrachi Y, Chiarelli B, Savage-Rumbaugh S, Rubert-Pugh E, Fontaine L, Panchevre M, Ronen A, Nevo E. (2019). *Pan* Survival in the 21st Century: Chimpanzee Cultural Preservation, Rehabilitation, and Emancipation Manifesto. *Human Evolution*. Vol. 34 - n. 1-2 (1-19). DOI: 10.14673/HE201912047
10. Savage-Rumbaugh S, **Roffman I**, Lingomo S, Rubert-Pugh E (2018). The Fully Conscious Ape *International Journal of Comparative Psychology*, Volume 31, 1-62.
11. Savage-Rumbaugh S, **Roffman I**. Advent of selfhood. *J Vet Med Animal Sci*. 2018; 1: 1003. (pp 1-25).

12. **Roffman I** et al. (2019, in preparation). Comparison of wear-patterns created on stone-tools used by bonobos with those of early hominins exhibited in the fossil record.

13. **Roffman I** et al. (2019, in preparation). A short report: an effective approach for the preservation of chimpanzee cultural diversity in Mali.

14. **Roffman I**, Mizrachi Y, Chiarelli B, Savage-Rumbaugh S, Rubert-Pugh E, Fontaine L, Panchevre M, Ronen A, Nevo E. (2019). *Pan* Survival in the 21st Century: Chimpanzee Cultural Preservation, Rehabilitation, and Emancipation Manifesto. In: "Los grandes simios y sus derechos básicos". Ed.: P. P. Terrados. Madrid, ACCI (ASOCIACIÓN CULTURAL Y CIENTÍFICA IBEROAMERICANA): 537-566.

15. **Roffman I**, (2020). Our Roots & Shoots Mali program in featured in the June 2020 International Primate Protection Leagues' Newsletter:

<https://www.ippl.org/newsletter/2020s/IPPL-News-June-2020.pdf#page=8>

### **Teaching Courses**

2<sup>nd</sup> semester 2019: Introduction to Human Evolution (Yezreel Valley College)

1<sup>st</sup> semester 2019-2020: Introduction to Cultural Anthropology in an Applied Perspective (Yezreel Valley College)

2<sup>nd</sup> semester 2020: Introduction to Psychology (Yezreel Valley College)

1<sup>st</sup> semester fall 2020: American Corrections (Criminology: Yezreel Valley College) and Introduction to Psychology (Yezreel Valley College)

2<sup>nd</sup> semester 2021: Introduction to Human Evolution (Yezreel Valley College) and Introduction to Psychology (Yezreel Valley College).

### **Other Noteworthy Activities and Skills**

1. The Israeli coordinator of the "Roots & Shoots" humanitarian, environmental and educational programs for youth, the Jane Goodall Institute.
2. Founder, the Mali Chimpanzee Cultural Preservation, Rehabilitation and Heritage League.
3. Artist (visual arts).
4. Advisor on environmental protection, rehabilitation and sustainable development to the Green Forum of Yesh Atid party.
5. Founder, the Israeli Great Ape Personhood Rights & Welfare League.
6. Director, the Jane Goodall Institute Israel (based at the Max Stern Yezreel Valley College) and Roots & Shoots Mali.