

# 2018 CCUBC Graduate Student Research Prize

**Tiago Simões**

**University of Alberta, Edmonton, AB**

[The Origin of Squamates Revealed by a Middle Triassic Lizard from the Italian Alps.](#)

[Nature 557, 706-709 \(PDF\)](#)

[Dr. Michael Caldwell Nomination Letter in support of Tiago Simões](#)

Tiago Simões started his career in his home city (Rio de Janeiro, Brazil), where he obtained his BSc and MSc in Biological Sciences- Zoology at the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, and began developing research on fossil reptiles at the National Museum of Brazil. He subsequently moved to Canada to pursue his PhD with Dr. Michael Caldwell at the University of Alberta, where he expanded his expertise on the evolution of lizards and snakes. His research interests include combining data from living and extinct species, as well as morphological and molecular data, to explore and investigate deep time problems in reptile evolution. In the last and core chapter of his PhD thesis— published in Nature as “The origin of squamates revealed by a Middle Triassic lizard from the Italian Alps”—he provides the largest dataset ever assembled to assess broad-scale reptile relationships, finding the first ever agreement between morphological and molecular hypotheses on the early evolution of lizards. Further, he indicates that the major reptile lineages first evolved prior to the greatest mass extinction in the history of complex life, not after it, as previously thought. Tiago is currently a research associate at the University of Alberta, and will move on early 2019 for a postdoc at Harvard University to investigate the impact of the Permian-Triassic Mass extinction on the evolution of reptiles

