

## FACULTY NEWS



COOPER

**Andrea Cooper** joins the Center and Carolina's Department of Religious Studies this semester as the the Leonard and Tobee Kaplan Fellow in Modern Jewish Thought. She holds a Ph.D. from New York University and we will profile her in the next edition of this newsletter.



LAM

**Joseph Lam** has been promoted to a tenure-track assistant professor position in Classical Hebrew, Department of Religious Studies. He holds

a Ph.D. from University of Chicago and joined Carolina in 2011 as lecturer for Classical Hebrew.

Three of our faculty members — **Ruth von Bernuth**, **Evyatar Marienberg**, and **Yaron Shemer** — have recently gained tenure and have been promoted to Associate Professors.



CASSEN

**Flora Cassen**, the MA and Sonja van der Horst Fellow in Jewish History and Culture and assistant professor, Department of History, will serve as faculty

liaison to the Center's advisory board for this coming academic year.



LAMBERT

**David Lambert**, assistant professor, Department of Religious Studies, will serve the Center as curriculum advisor this year.

**Joseph Lam** will serve as undergraduate student liaison.

## The Christopher R. Browning Research and Travel Grant for Students Working in Holocaust Studies

On May 2nd, the University celebrated the remarkable career of retiring professor Christopher Browning with a full day seminar titled *The*



BROWNING

*Holocaust as History: A Symposium in Honor of Christopher Browning.*

The seminar was sponsored by the Department of History, Carolina Center for Jewish Studies, North Carolina German Studies Seminar Series, Center for European Studies, and the Institute for the Arts and Humanities.

Previously, on April 19th, the Center's faculty and advisory board celebrated his many contributions to Jewish Studies at Carolina.

"Christopher's work literally transformed the field of Holocaust studies," said Ruth von Bernuth, director of the Center. "But those of us who work with him also know how instrumental he has been in helping build the Jewish Studies program, how he has drawn promising graduate students to Carolina, and how his courses are in high demand by our undergraduates."

To formally recognize his dedication and contributions to the field and to Carolina, the Center has created a new research grant for undergraduate and graduate students working in the field of Holocaust studies. The Christopher R. Browning Research and Travel Grant will be awarded for the first time this academic year.

The new research grant will be funded through



Jonathan Hess, Ruth von Bernuth, and Christopher Browning at the April dinner.

private gifts, including the Director's Discretionary Fund and donations made specifically to support the grant. An initial private gift was made by the Valone family of Raleigh. T. Fielder Valone graduated from Carolina in 2011 and is now pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of Indiana, with a focus on Modern Central and East European History and Holocaust Studies. His family made a gift of \$3,000 to the research grant in recognition of the mentorship and inspiration provided by Professor Browning.

"Professor Browning's teaching and advising made a tremendous impact on our family, and in fact, led our son on a whole new career path," said Tom Valone. "We are pleased to help the Center continue to inspire future Holocaust scholars by supporting this new research grant."

Browning joined Carolina in 1999; he previously taught at Pacific Lutheran University from 1974-1999. He has written extensively about Nazi decision- and policy-making in regard to the origins of the Final Solution, the behavior and motives of personnel involved in implementing Nazi Jewish policy, and the use of survivor testimony. Some of his books include: *Remembering Survival: Inside a Nazi Slave Labor Camp*, 2010; *The Origins of the Final Solution: The Evolution of Nazi Jewish Policy, September 1939-March 1942*, 2004; *Nazi Policy, Jewish Workers, German Killers*, 2000; *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, 1992; *The Final Solution and the German Foreign Office*, 1978.

"We certainly wish Chris well in his retirement and take comfort knowing that he will stay a frequent visitor of the Center," said von Bernuth. "We are also confident that Holocaust studies will continue to thrive at Carolina under the direction of Karen Auerbach, the Ambassador Stuart E. Eizenstat Fellow in Jewish History and Culture."

For information on how to make a contribution to this research grant, contact the Arts and Sciences Foundation at (919) 962-0108.

# From the Director's Desk

## *Summer Research, Worldwide*



**Ruth von Bernuth**

Director, Carolina Center for Jewish Studies

Associate Professor, Department of Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures

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(919) 962-4866

My “director’s desk” is currently a virtual one, since I am writing this while on my way to Chelm, the town in southeastern Poland whose inhabitants enjoy such notoriety in Jewish literature for their bottomless foolishness. But I am by no means the only member of the Center on the move this summer. Some of my colleagues are in Israel to give talks or to conduct research, among them

Jodi Magness, whose latest exciting discoveries at the ancient synagogue of Huqoq, in Galilee, are highlighted in this newsletter. Other Carolina faculty are in Europe, among them our associate director, Yaakov Ariel, and Karen Auerbach who are both spending some time at the University of

Leipzig’s Simon Dubnow Institute for Jewish History and Culture, with which our Center has a fruitfully partnered over the last decade. Elsewhere around the globe, Martin Sueldo is in Argentina, exploring the possibility of setting up a UNC summer program on South American Jewish culture in Buenos Aires.

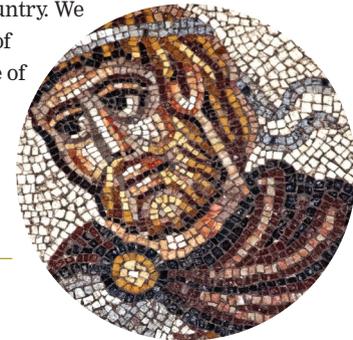
Many of our graduate and undergraduate students are also traveling. Four undergraduates and three graduate students received support from the Center in order to excavate with Jodi in Huqoq.

Other students will be working indoors — Sam Kessler, for instance, who is researching in the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem. Other students are in Boston and New York conducting interviews with Holocaust survivors and Emma Woelk is in Buenos Aires to pursue her research interest in Yiddish theater. Much of this traveling receives support by grants from the Center, which is made possible entirely by your generosity.

When we are all back on campus in August, we can look forward to an exciting new academic year, with new colleagues, students, and guest lecturers to encounter. Notably, we will be welcoming Andrea Cooper, the new Leonard and Tobee Kaplan Fellow in Modern

*We can look forward to an exciting new academic year, with new colleagues, students, and guest lecturers.*

Jewish Thought, and we are extremely happy, too, that the Center is in a position this year to support three incoming graduate students with stipends. This extra support often makes all the difference in competing for some of the very best graduate students in the country. We hope to see many of you at one or more of our public programs, as well.



*Hannah Nemer, in red, during the hike to one of the secret synagogues.*



## *The Hidden Jews of Ethiopia*

WRITTEN BY HANNAH NEMER, '14

I spent this past spring break traveling through Ethiopia, visiting with members of the Beta Avraham Jewish community to record their stories of faith, oppression, and resilience. The Beta Avraham (also known as the Balla Ejj) community is Ethiopia’s virtually unknown Jewish population. Between the 15th and 18th centuries, the community moved away from the better-known Beta Israel who have since migrated to Israel. There are still more than 100,000 descendants of Jewish ancestry living in Ethiopia — more than 20,000 of whom secretly practice a pre-Talmudic form of Judaism. Despite efforts to outwardly conceal their Jewish identity, the Beta Avraham are persecuted by neighbors who seize their property and threaten their lives.

Partnering with Israeli film and music producer Irene Orleansky, I was fortunate enough to go into the community to record a few of their many stories

and traditions as part of a documentary film — *Balla Ejj: The Hidden Jews of Ethiopia*. The documentary will celebrate the community’s ongoing struggle to maintain a religious identity and their desire to be known by the larger Jewish world. The documentary will be the first with access to the secret synagogues of the community and the guarded narratives of elders.

The funding I received from the Carolina Center for Jewish Studies has proven invaluable during this process, enabling me to access the necessary technology to enhance this production. I am grateful, now more than ever, as I am spending this summer working to edit the documentary using equipment that I was able to acquire through the Center’s research and travel grant. We hope to have a rough cut of the film complete by the summer’s end. For more information on the project, please visit: <http://www.ireneorleansky.com>



# undergraduate student profile

## Liliana Gregory, '15



Liliana Gregory working at the Galicia Jewish Museum in Krakow, Poland, summer 2013.

“What drove me to declare the Jewish Studies minor was Professor Ewa Wampuszyc’s 20th Century Polish Literature and Culture course. It showed me how integrated Central European Studies and Jewish Studies are. Every Central European Studies class I’ve had since, whether cross-listed with Jewish Studies or not, has addressed the Jewish history and culture within the region in some capacity,” said Liliana Gregory, ’15. “I wanted to take this academic knowledge and somehow turn it into practical experience. This led me to an internship at the Galicia Jewish Museum in Kraków, Poland during summer 2013.”

During Gregory’s internship, she guided English-speaking groups through the museum, led a workshop for students, trained new interns, sold tickets, translated documents from Polish to English, and updated the intern blog. Gregory received a travel and research grant from the Center, which allowed her to not only to have this experience, “but to jump in with both feet.”

“It paid for my flight, and it allowed me to live directly on the market square of Kazimierz, Kraków’s historic Jewish district. With the Center’s funding, I was able to teach literally hundreds of people from around the world about Polish-Jewish history and relations and the big questions surrounding each. While I was there, I also got to see the tremendous revitalization of Jewish history and culture sweeping Poland,

including the nine-day Jewish Culture Festival.”

Gregory, from Atlanta, is pursuing a double major in Germanic and Slavic Languages and Literatures with a Central European Studies Concentration and Economics. She also is minoring in Jewish Studies and is planning to write an honors thesis which will study how the post-1989 Jewish cultural revival in Kraków, Poland has contributed to the cultural and economic revitalization of Kazimierz in the early 21st century. This year, she is a recipient of the Louis & Nellie Skalny Scholarship from the American Council for Polish Culture, which provides a \$4,000 scholarship for the fall semester.

Gregory is also busy outside the classroom. She is a pianist for campus musicals, volunteers every week at the Inter-Faith Council, and is the undergraduate student representative for the Center’s advisory board. Last year, she worked as an advertising intern at the *Carolina Alumni Review* magazine, the year before she was treasurer of the UNC Pre-Law Chapter of Phi Alpha Delta Law Fraternity and co-chaired UNC Hillel’s Reading of the Names event to commemorate Holocaust victims.

When asked about her long-term career goals, she had a very honest response: “I wish I had a stellar answer to this question, but alas, I don’t know what I want to do with myself yet.”

*Private support for undergraduate student research and travel helps nurture young scholars, creates unique life experiences, and furthers Carolina’s commitment to student-focused research. For more information, contact the Arts and Sciences Foundation at (919) 962-0108.*

### MOSAICS AT HUQOQ

Directed by Professor **Jodi Magness**, excavations in the Late Roman (fifth century) synagogue at Huqoq, an ancient Jewish village in Israel’s Lower Galilee, have brought to light stunning mosaics which decorated the floor. In 2012, a mosaic showing

Samson and the foxes (Judges 15:4) was discovered in the synagogue’s east aisle. In summer 2013, a second mosaic was found which shows Samson carrying the gate of Gaza on his shoulders (Judges 16:3). A third mosaic discovered in the synagogue’s east aisle, which is divided into three horizontal sections that differ in style, quality and content from the Samson scenes, was revealed this summer (shown above left). The lowest register shows a bull pierced by spears and a dying or dead soldier holding

a shield. The middle register depicts an arcade with the arches framing young men arranged around a seated elderly man. The uppermost register depicts a meeting between two large male figures: one is a soldier wearing elaborate battle dress who is leading a large bull by the horns, accompanied by

soldiers and elephants with shields tied to their sides and the other is an elderly man wearing a ceremonial white tunic and mantle, accompanied by young men. The identification of the figures in this mosaic is unclear because there are no stories in the Hebrew Bible involving elephants. As battle elephants were associated with Greek armies beginning with Alexander the Great, Professor Magness suggests that this mosaic might be a depiction of a Jewish legend about the meeting between Alexander and the Jewish high priest. Excavations are scheduled to continue in summer 2015.

*A group of seven students participated in the dig with the assistance of research and travel grants from the Center; including, from left to right: Lauren Garrett, Austin Andrews, David Culclasure, Daniel Schindler, Brian Coussens, Bradley Erickson, and Jocelyn Burney. Photos by J. Haberman.*



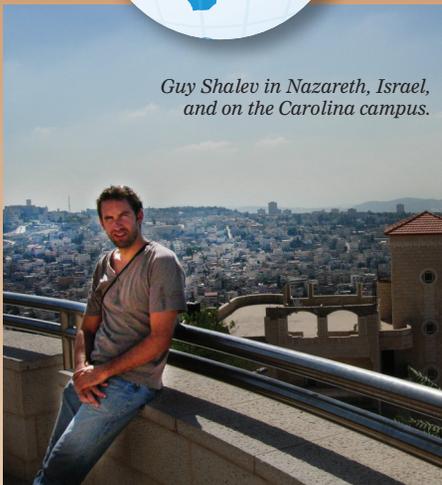
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# graduate student profile

## Guy Shalev

Guy Shalev in Nazareth, Israel, and on the Carolina campus.



Having grown up in a middle-class suburb of Tel Aviv, Guy Shalev says he never met any Palestinians. The homogenous secular Ashkenazi Jewish environment in which he had grown up was not unusual given Israel's segregated education system and communities.

"Toward the end of my military service, I started questioning the world around me and I had an urge to explore my surroundings firsthand," said Shalev. "I found anthropology to be a way to cross these boundaries to really communicate with people and gain an in-depth systematic understanding of the conflicted reality in which I was raised."

After earning undergraduate and graduate degrees in Israel, Shalev developed a commitment to an anthropological study in healthcare settings. This directed him to the medical anthropology Ph.D. program at Carolina.

"UNC faculty strengths in critical medical anthropology, science and technology studies, and political anthropology, as well as my participation in the Duke-UNC graduate certificate program in Middle East studies, have enabled me to formulate my new research that reflects my interest in the experiences of Palestinian physicians in the Israeli health system."

Shalev's doctoral thesis is titled *Doctors with Borders*. With Palestinians comprising about 12 percent of physicians working in Israel, the country's public health system is one of the few

arenas in which Arab and Jewish citizens work side-by-side. While the Israeli medical sphere is often presented as scientific and neutral, Shalev says that suspicion and hostility still mark everyday encounters.

"My ethnographic research explores how Palestinian medical professionals interact with Jewish patients, colleagues and state institutions as they navigate the medical system as a workplace," said Shalev. "Receiving the Silver Fellowship will allow me to carry out my 12-month research plan that includes ethnographic fieldwork in four main sites: hospitals, community clinics, medical schools and formal political activity. Through participant observations I aim to examine everyday practices and I will shadow physicians as they interact with colleagues and patients. In addition to ethnographic research, I also will engage in an analysis of Israeli Hebrew-language printed, digital and social media representations of Palestinian doctors, especially during times of tension.

Shalev, a graduate student in Carolina's Anthropology department, plans to complete his Ph.D. in 2017. He holds an M.A. in Sociology and Anthropology and a B.A. in Psychology and Sociology-Anthropology from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Last year, his Master's thesis won the Israeli Sociological Society's Best MA Thesis Award and the Society for the Anthropology of Religion's Student Paper Prize.

*The Rhonda A. and Robert Hillel Silver, '77 Graduate Fellowship supports a promising graduate student working in Jewish Studies in the advanced stages of his or her career at Carolina. Private support for graduate student fellowships and stipends for graduate student research and travel help nurture young scholars, create relevant scholarly works, train the next generation of leading teachers and researchers, and further Carolina's commitment to student-focused research. For more information, contact the Arts and Sciences Foundation at (919) 962-0108.*

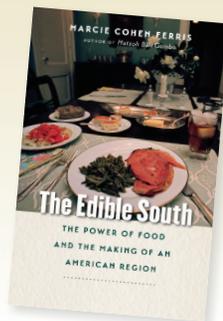
### EXPANDING COURSE OFFERINGS

An astounding 10 new Jewish Studies courses were submitted to the University's registrar last year, a reflection of the Center's growing number of faculty members, the ability to provide private support so faculty can work on new course development, and the ever-increasing demand for Jewish Studies courses at Carolina, in part to support the new major and the two minors. The topics for the new courses span the centuries and cover the globe: Argentine Jewish Culture; Expulsion of the Jews from Spain in 1492; The European Renaissance and the Jews; Jewish History from the Crusades to the European Enlightenment; The Search for Modern Jewish Identity; Ghettos and Shtetls? Urban Life in East European Jewish History; Classical Hebrew II:

A Linguistic Introduction to the Hebrew Bible; Arab-Jews: Culture, Community and Coexistence; East European Jewish History and Culture from 1772 to the Present; and Argentine Jewish Film. These courses will be co-listed with four academic departments in the College, including Asia Studies, History, Religious Studies, and Romance Languages.

### THE EDIBLE SOUTH

**Marcie Cohen Ferris**, associate professor, Department of American Studies, has a new book being published this fall titled: *The Edible South: The Power of Food and the Making of an American*



Region. For more information, visit: <http://uncpress.unc.edu/books/10223.html>

### GRADUATE STUDENT RECRUITMENT

This past spring the Center offered recruitment grants and "top-up" grants to prospective outstanding graduate students with an interest in a field related to Jewish Studies. Applicants to Carolina were nominated by their academic departments. This fall, Carolina welcomes **Tine Rassalle**, in the Department of Religious Studies, who received the Tau Epsilon Phi Graduate Student Fellowship in Jewish Studies, which includes a stipend, full tuition, fees, and health insurance for the first and fifth year of study, and **Robin Buller** and **Max Lazar**, both in the Department of History, who received \$7,000 top-up grants.

*community events*

**What is the Meaning of Bagels and Falafel?**

*Eli N. Evans Distinguished Lecture in Jewish Studies*  
Nov. 17, 7:30 p.m.

*William and Ida Friday Center for Continuing Education*

**SHAUL STAMPFER**, professor at Hebrew University and author of books on Eastern European Jewry including *Families, Rabbis and Education* and *Lithuanian Yeshivas of the Nineteenth Century*, will point out the history and hidden symbolic meaning behind two classic modern Jewish foods: bagels, an iconic food of American Jewish cuisine, and falafel, which has a similar role as an Israeli Jewish food. In his talk he will highlight the process of how bagels and falafels became a national food, which illuminates not only the history of food but also the societies who created the food.



**Golde and Her Daughters: Soviet Jewish Women and the Schizophrenic Model of Acculturation**

*Eli N. Evans Distinguished Lecture in Jewish Studies II*  
Jan. 26, 7:30 p.m.

*William and Ida Friday Center for Continuing Education*

**ELISSA BEMPORAD** professor at Queens College, The City University of New York, and author of the award-winning book *Becoming Soviet Jews: The Bolshevik Experiment in Minsk*, will examine the complicated process of socialization and acculturation into the Soviet regime as experienced by Jewish women, from the Bolshevik Revolution until the eve of World War II.



**Crossing the Boundary from Gentile to Jew in the 19th Century American South**

*Sylvia and Irving Margolis Lecture on the Jewish Experience in the American South*

April 20, 7:30 p.m.

*William and Ida Friday Center for Continuing Education*

**DANA KAPLAN**, lecturer in Jewish Studies at the United Theological College of the University of the West Indies and a rabbi in Kingston, Jamaica, will investigate the unique dynamics underlying conversion to Judaism in the 19th century American south, including how Jews adapted their religious and ethnic identity to conform to the expectations of southern society.



*academic lectures*

**The Talmud's Great Dispute of Religiosity**

*The Morris, Ida and Alan Heilig Lectureship in Jewish Studies*  
September 15, 5:30 p.m.

*Hyde Hall*

**MENACHEM FISCH**, professor and director of the Center for Religious and Interreligious Studies Project at Tel Aviv University, has published on the history of science and mathematics, confirmation theory and rationality, and talmudic literature and legal reasoning. In his talk he will explore the Talmud's dispute of religiosity, the dispute about the very moral perfection of God and his Word. But what can it mean to be religiously obligated, faithful or committed, it asks, to a morally flawed deity and religious system?



**The Landscape of Monotheism**

*Kaplan-Brauer Lecture on the Contribution of Judaism to Civilization*  
February 23, 5:30 p.m.

*Location TBA*

**BARUCH HALPERN**, the Covenant Foundation Professor of Jewish Studies at University of Georgia, co-director of archeological excavations of the ancient city Megiddo in Israel and author of various books including *David's Secret Demons: Messiah, Murderer, Traitor, King*, will discuss how and why monotheism was institutionalized in ancient Judah and Jerusalem, how this ideological strand continued after the exile, and influenced evolving Judaism as a whole, and then Christianity and Islam, what occasioned the idea and its socialization and governmental imposition, and what it signaled to religious traditionalists.



*seminars*

**The Uhlman Family Seminar: Jewish Literature**

This continuing education seminar featuring faculty from UNC and elsewhere is planned for April 18, 2015. Please check our Web site for seminar topics, speakers, and registration fees. This seminar is offered by the Program in Humanities and Human Values and is made possible by a grant from the Uhlman Family Fund. Pre-registration is required.

All lectures (with the exception of the Uhlman Family Seminar) are free and open to the public and no tickets or reservations are required. Seating is not reserved. To receive updates about our event schedule, please subscribe to our listserv by emailing us at [ccjs@unc.edu](mailto:ccjs@unc.edu) or visit our Web site at [jewishstudies.unc.edu](http://jewishstudies.unc.edu)



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### September 15

The Talmud's Dispute of Religiosity

### November 17

What is the Meaning of Bagels and Falafel?

### January 26

Soviet Jewish Women and Acculturation

### February 23

The Landscape of Monotheism

### April 18

Uhlman Family Seminar, Jewish Literature

### April 20

Crossing the Boundary from Gentile to Jew

Please visit our Web site at [jewishstudies.unc.edu](http://jewishstudies.unc.edu) for more event information. If you'd like to receive updates about upcoming events, please join our listserv by emailing us at [ccjs@unc.edu](mailto:ccjs@unc.edu). In the email message, please provide both your email and mailing addresses.

## *Archival Work at the National Library of Israel, Jerusalem*

WRITTEN BY SAMUEL J. KESSLER, *graduate student, Department of Religious Studies*

For anyone who spends even a little time in Jewish studies, one quickly learns that the National Library in Jerusalem is full of characters and an endless number of anecdotes about them. At conferences and after seminars, at Shabbat dinners and morning coffee breaks, it seems nearly impossible for anyone who has been to, or spent time around, the NLI to resist exchanging such tales. Which meant, for me at least, that walking into the NLI building for the first time this summer came with a certain amount of historical trepidation and a heavy dose of humility: Is my work really worth being given a desk in such a place?

Of course, though the NLI does function in some ways like a summer camp for scholars—"Oh, it's been a whole year, we must do lunch!"—in the end, after we've all put away our bags and found space at a table, what each of us settles down to do bears striking resemblance: bend our heads low and work.

The archives room where I spend most of each day is in the basement at the back. To get there one must go past the café—which always smells deliciously of baked bread and coffee—and down a long corridor lined with offices that open into more offices, their stacks of book seeming to stay upright only by leaning precariously against other books,

like an peculiarly designed game of office-wide Jenga. As you pass you see computers from the early '90s half hidden by piles of papers in unendingly cluttered rooms. You see men and women hunched over keyboards or scraps of manuscript. Through another set of doors is the microfilm room, where faded letters in a dozen languages reflect off eye-glasses and crinkled foreheads. Behind them, hidden from all who work in the spacious reading rooms two floors above, are the rows of desks for the archive, and the revolving cast of workers who ferry back and forth from locked rooms the folders and boxes that—without fanfare or individuality—contain within them the delightful richness of history.

What I came to the NLI to find is contained in 82 folders spread over three boxes. To start my work each morning I sit at a desk and am handed a folder

—I began with number one and will end with number 82. The excitement of this life is in the minutia: I never quite know what I will find when I open each new folder. Sometimes it is only a single letter, scribbled on the back of a nondescript piece of paper, mostly illegible from the moment of its creation more than 150 years ago and still so today. Sometimes all I find are empty envelopes, their contents lost in the vicissitudes of time.

But more often I open a folder and a small glimpse of the world of the past appears like magic dust spread out on the table before me: dozens of letters between adoring brothers, or between a son and his father, or a husband and wife; newspaper clippings from Vienna at the height of the Austro-Prussian war; the record of a synagogue's kindergarten fieldtrip. These are the little hints about past lives that I look so much forward to when I begin each day. They are the basic ingredients of history, the part that never lets me forget that I'm not writing about volcanoes or asteroids, but about people.

*Sam Kessler at the Pool of Siloam, Jerusalem.*

