

January 14, 2019

Dear Sirs and Madams,

**RE: Steven D Reece**

I had the pleasure of first meeting Steven at the conference "A Cross-Disciplinary Seminar on European Jewish Cemeteries: Theory, Policy, Management and Dissemination", held in Vilnius in October 2015. Steven spoke passionately about his work with The Matzevah Foundation to restore Jewish cemeteries in Poland, how this work can foster Christian-Jewish relations and issues around justice and the Holocaust. I was immediately struck by Steven's excellent communication skills and the way that he was able to convey a number of complex issues in layman's terms to a diverse audience. Steven spoke emphatically about the Holocaust and about the ongoing challenges facing those who attempt to research it and engage with Jewish heritage in the present.

His speech at this conference was inspirational and immediately afterwards I approached him regarding the possibility of a collaboration. This led to us putting together an application for funding to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) for a project entitled "Recording Cultural Genocide and Killing Sites in Jewish Cemeteries". This bid was successful and resulted in us undertaking two seasons of collaborative fieldwork in Poland during which my students had the opportunity to work alongside Steven and his team to research and restore a number of Jewish cemeteries. My students benefited hugely from Steven's expertise but also from his excellent communication skills and ability to inspire debate. During the project, we hosted a number of discussion groups to allow students and volunteers to consider issues surrounding the work we were doing. Steven offered a number of thought-provoking questions for the group to consider and provided valuable input within the discussions. All of my students commented on how much they enjoyed working with Steven and how he had pushed them to think outside the realms of their discipline and knowledge base due to the way he communicated with them. They enjoyed his supervisory style and the fact that he was so open with them about his own experiences, as well as being interested to hear about theirs. As part of the project, Steven also delivered a lecture alongside me at Brama Grodska in Lublin and, again, the diverse audience that attended all commented on his excellent presentation style.

Steven is an inspirational speaker and a born leader. He has been a pleasure to work with and I sincerely hope that, once our current project has finished, we will be able to work together again.

Yours faithfully



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