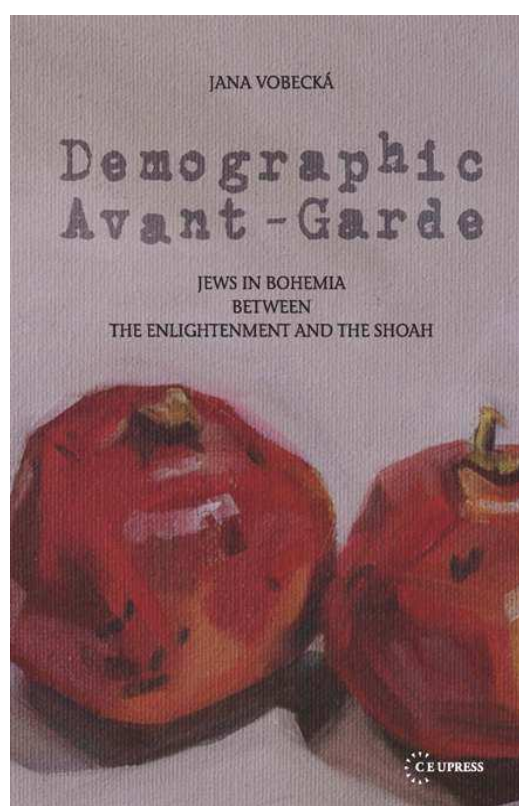


DEMOGRAPHIC AVANT-GARDE

JEWS IN BOHEMIA BETWEEN THE ENLIGHTENMENT AND THE SHOAH

This book studies the unique demographic behavior of Jews in Bohemia, starting from a moment in history when industrialization in Central Europe was far away in the future and when Jews were still living legally restricted lives in ghettos. Under conditions not stipulated by conventional demographic theories, Bohemian Jews started recording marked decreases in mortality and fertility that signaled an early onset of their demographic transition.

Demographic Avant-Garde examines what made Jews in Bohemia true forerunners of the demographic transition in Europe and why this occurred when it did. The book proposes (1) a critical evaluation of the reliability and completeness of available historical data sources, (2) an analysis of the main demographic processes and their interpretation in a larger social-historical and international context (3) an analysis of the social and economic position of Jews within Czech society and of their contribution to the domestic economy, (4) a summary and publication of the primary data sources used. *Demographic Avant-Garde* scrutinizes demographic statistics from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-twentieth century, and examines what made Bohemian Jews distinct from gentiles and from Jews in other lands.



“A ground-breaking work of demographic and social history based on a painstaking combing of archival material, careful quantitative analysis, and originality of argument. *Demographic Avant-Garde* changes our understanding of Jewish life in the Bohemian lands in fundamental ways and will be required reading for serious students of the modern Jewish experience.” – **Hillel J. Kieval**, Goldstein Professor of Jewish History and Thought, Washington University in St. Louis

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“Jana Vobecká’s book makes an important contribution to our general understanding of the drivers of demographic transition. It nicely complements earlier studies in the context of the Princeton European Fertility Project In my reading of this important book, the higher education of Jews was a key reason for their earlier and faster demographic transition.” – **Wolfgang Lutz**, Founding Director, Wittgenstein Centre for Demography and Global Human Capital, Vienna

“Jews in Central-Western Europe were among the extraordinary forerunners of a demographic transition ... (that) gradually expanded to the rest of European societies, and eventually to the near totality of humankind. This study by Jana Vobecká skillfully explores how and why it all began in Bohemia.” – **Sergio DellaPergola**, Professor Emeritus, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

2013, 220 pages, cloth, ISBN978-615-5225-33-8, 55.00/ €50.00/ £45.00

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