



**Crossing the Jabbok: Illness and Death in
Askenazi Judaism in Sixteenth - through
Nineteenth-Century Prague (Contraversions:
Critical Studies in Jewish Literature, Culture, and
Society)**

Sylvie-Anne Goldberg

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To date, remarkably little research attention has been paid to the development of Jewish beliefs and rituals about illness and death. *Crossing the Jabbok* presents an illuminating study of such views and practices among Ashkenazi Jews (1500s-1800s) and is one of the first works to apply history of *mentalités* methods to a topic in Jewish cultural studies. Focusing on Prague, then the center of Central and Western European Jewry, the author draws on a rich array of materials to explore what was distinctively Jewish about the approach of Jews to sickness and dying. Her discoveries shed new light on the institution of the *hevra kaddisha*, or burial society, and many existing customs.

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