Going Greek

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The world stands out on either side
No wider than the heart is wide;
Above the world is stretched the sky,—
No higher than the soul is high.
The heart can push the sea and land
Farther away on either hand . . .

"Renascence" by Edna St. Vincent Millay (1917)

Plus ça change, plus ça reste la même chose
The more things change, the more they stay the same.

. . . And when the former high priest Jason rose against Menelaus, who was appointed after him, the populace was divided between the two, the Tobiads being on the side of Menelaus, while the majority of the people supported Jason; and being hard pressed by him, Menelaus and the Tobiads withdrew, and going to Antiochus informed him that they wished to abandon their country's laws and the way of life prescribed by these, and to follow the king's laws and adopt the Greek way of life. Accordingly, they petitioned him to permit them to build a gymnasium in Jerusalem. And when he had granted this, they also concealed the circumcision of their genitals in order to be Greeks even when unclothed, and giving up whatever other national customs they had, they imitated the practices of foreign nations.

Josephus, "The Hellenizers Appeal to Antiochus Epiphanes," in Jewish Antiquities XII. 240–243 citing I Maccabees, i.11

"A cow can sooner jump over a roof than a Jew get into a Russian university! They guard their schools from us like a bowl of cream from a cat."

—Tevye in Sholom Aleichem's Tevey the Dairyman

Oy yoy yoy, Zeta Beta Toi
What have you done to my little Yiddish boy?
I sent him off to college to learn to read and write
Now he dates a shiksa every Friday night
I sent him off to college to learn to read and spell
Now he thinks boruch atoh is a college yell!
I sent him off to college to learn the Jewish way,
Now he thinks a hora is a girl who's gone astray . . .

—Popular American Jewish folksong, c. 1920s–1930s
Contents

List of Illustrations 9
List of Jewish National College Fraternities and Sororities, c. 1930 13
Preface 15

Introduction 25

CHAPTER 1
The Origins of Jewish Fraternities 31

CHAPTER 2
"Oh, Yes, That Nonsectarian Jewish Fraternity":
The Search for Identity, 1895–1906 47

CHAPTER 3
"Great Things on a Great Scale":
Expansion and Opposition, 1909–1919 69

CHAPTER 4
The Golden Age: College Fraternities in the "Roaring Twenties" 95

CHAPTER 5
"A Treacherous Alma Mater": Facing College Antisemitism 117

CHAPTER 6
"What Have I Done?": Intra-Jewish Hostility and the
Internalization of Antisemitism 143
CONTENTS

CHAPTER 7
"The Idea of Quitting Is Abhorrent": Challenges during the Great Depression 173

CHAPTER 8
Fighting Back and Keeping Up Standards 197

CHAPTER 9
In the Shadow of Hitler: Social Life, Snobbery, and Jewish Identity 229

Epilogue: World War II and the Beginning of the End for the Jewish Fraternity System 265

Appendix A: Chapter Rolls of the National Jewish College Fraternities and Sororities to 1968 283

Appendix B: Directory of Jewish Fraternity and Sorority Chapters at Selected Colleges and Universities 319

Appendix C: Some Distinguished Alumni 343

Appendix D: Songs of the Jewish Fraternities and Sororities c. 1920s–1950s 347

Notes 359
Bibliography 409
Index of Names 415
Index of Colleges and Universities 425
Index of Subjects 433