

# Contents

<i>List of Figures</i>	page ix
<i>Acknowledgments</i>	xi
<i>Note on Spelling, Transliteration, and Translation</i>	xv
Introduction	I
<i>Language and Nation</i>	3
<i>Folk and Elite</i>	5
<i>Past and Present</i>	8
<i>Objectivity and Engagement</i>	10
<i>Diaspora and State</i>	11
<i>Sources and Organization</i>	13
1. “Language Raised to the Level of a Political Factor”: Yiddish Scholarship before YIVO	17
<i>Introduction: Setting the Stage</i>	17
<i>Precursors: Collection, Publishing, and Teaching</i>	18
<i>World War I and Its Aftermath</i>	24
<i>Wandering Scholars</i>	30
<i>Nokhem Shtif and the Dilemmas of Yiddish Scholarship</i>	38
<i>Conclusion</i>	42
2. “The Idea of the Institute Is Already Ripe”: The Founding and First Stages of YIVO, 1924–1925	44
<i>Introduction: Rising Interest in a Yiddish Institute</i>	44
<i>The Initial Plan and Reactions</i>	45
<i>The Mission of the Institute</i>	55
<i>The Start of Scholarly Work</i>	62
<i>Conclusion</i>	69

3.	“From the Folk, For the Folk, With the Folk”: Academic Work, 1925–1932	71
	<i>Introduction: To Serve the Folk</i>	71
	Dos zamlen	72
	<i>Balancing Past and Present</i>	80
	<i>Scholarship for the People</i>	90
	<i>The Dilemmas of Political Engagement</i>	99
	<i>Conclusion</i>	110
4.	“The Capital of Yiddishland”: The Geography of Jewish Culture, 1925–1933	112
	<i>Introduction: The Mystique of Vilna</i>	112
	<i>Yiddish Scholarship between East and West</i>	113
	<i>The Geography of Funding</i>	118
	<i>YIVO at a Watershed</i>	125
	<i>“The Temple of Yiddish Scholarship”</i>	131
	<i>Conclusion</i>	139
5.	“To Forge Intellectual Weapons for Our People!”: Scholarship in Times of Crisis, 1931–1939	141
	<i>Introduction: “Jewish Reality Has Changed”</i>	141
	<i>Recovering Finances and the World Convention</i>	143
	<i>New Directions in Scholarship</i>	149
	<i>Engaging the Jewish Public</i>	154
	<i>Publications and Language Planning</i>	163
	<i>Scholarship in Times of Crisis</i>	172
	<i>Conclusion</i>	178
	Epilogue: From Vilna to New York	181
	<i>World War II and Its Aftermath</i>	181
	<i>YIVO in the United States</i>	184
	<i>Conclusion</i>	190
	<i>The Reality of Interwar Yiddish Culture Versus the YIVO Myth</i>	190
	<i>Academic Achievements and Symbolic Significance</i>	192
	<i>The Economy of Yiddish Culture</i>	195
	Notes	199
	Bibliography	277
	Index	295