## Contents

**Acknowledgments** page xi

1 Introduction 1
   1 Late visitors to Pompeii 1
   2 Civilization? 6
   3 Why civilization? 10
   4 Interpreting the Viennese or the Austrians 14
   5 The conversations about Hayek 20
   6 Economic knowledge and knowledge about civilization 23

2 Cultivating economic knowledge
   *The student of civilization in Paradies* 27
   1 Wiener Kreise, in plural 31
   2 Between coffeehouse and university 36
   3 The rituals of the Kreise 40
   4 Conversation as scholarly practice 44

3 Trapped between ignorance, customs and social forces
   *The individual in the tradition of the Viennese students of civilization* 46
   1 Emancipating the individual 48
   2 Liberal hopes 51
   3 Liberal frustrations 56
   4 Social forces and elites 59
   5 Civilization and restraint 63

4 The market: civilizing or disciplinary force?
   *On the role of markets in the civilizing process* 67
   1 Socialism and the social engineers 68
   2 The return of natural instincts 72
# Contents

3 Markets and the civilizing process 76
4 A price worth paying 81
5 Conclusion – discipline and civilization 87

5 Instincts, civilization and communities

*The conversation about the individual and civilization continued* 91
1 Taming the instincts? 92
2 Sources of civilization 99
3 A shared culture 103

6 Therapeutic nihilism or the humility of the student

*On the limitations of the student of the civilization* 109
1 Therapeutic nihilism in medicine 112
2 Therapeutic nihilism as a cultural phenomenon 115
3 Therapeutic nihilism among the Viennese students of civilization 119
4 The limits of economic knowledge 124
5 Conclusion – acceptance and courage 128

7 The student as defender of civilization

*Or Scipio’s tears and the fate of a civilization* 131
1 Broch and the power of literature 134
2 Defeatism? 136
3 The flaws of historicism 138
4 The need for a defense 141
5 Renewed ideals? 145
6 Conclusion – fate and civilization 150

8 The student of civilization and his culture

*On the relationship between the scholar and his object of study* 153
1 Therapeutic and edifying knowledge 155
2 The responsibility of the social scientist 159
3 On the humility of the Viennese students of civilization 164

9 Meaning lost, meaning found

*The migration and initial reception of the Viennese students of civilization in the United States* 168
1 Social science in America 171
2 Depoliticization and repoliticization: a political and an economic legacy 176
3 Individual trajectories 180
Contents

10 What it means to be a student of civilization
   On modern economics and the study of civilization  185
1  What it means to be a student of civilization  185
2  When civilization breaks down  193
3  The scholarly heritage and traditions  196

Bibliography  203
Index  217