

### **International Conference on Gustav Shpet: Université Michel de Montaigne Bordeaux 3**

This pioneering conference organized by Prof. Maryse Dennes took place at the Bordeaux University 3 from November 21 to November 24. About three dozens of scholars from eight European countries and the USA gathered during the Thanksgiving period to discuss the multitude of topics covered by the meeting's title "Gustav Shpet and His Heritage: The Russian Sources of Structuralism and Semiotics."

Gustav Gustavovich Shpet (1879-1937), the author of numerous books and articles on historiography, hermeneutics, poetics, aesthetics, and linguistics to mention just the most important fields of his expertise, is being justly recognized as one of the most seminal figures of the Russian intellectual life in the decades preceding and following the Bolshevik revolution of 1917. His scholarly career that brought him in contact with such luminaries as Georgii Chelpanov, Edmund Husserl, and Roman Jakobson was terminated prematurely in 1929 when for ideological reasons he was dismissed from his academic position. For next six years while not allowed to publish under his own name Shpet worked as a translator rendering into Russian such Western classics as The Pickwick Club or The Phenomenology of Spirit. But in 1935 he was exiled to the Siberian city of Tomsk where two years later in a secret trial he was sentenced to death and executed.

The meeting pursued several agendas: to bring to the fore hitherto unknown materials about Shpet's life and work, to contextualize his role within the Russian intellectual history, and above all to assess the vitality of his ideas for the contemporary psychology, linguistics, and philosophy. Over sixty papers delivered in Russian, French and English (for the full list see <http://www.msha.fr/cercs/Colloque-Chpet/ChpetProg.pdf>) elicited productive discussions among the participants from a variety of academic disciplines. Equally seminal were convivial conversations which took place in the couloirs of Maison des sciences de l'homme d'Aquitaine and over the meals generously provided by the organizers on and off the campus of the Bordeaux University. The signal value of this conference does not rest merely in highlighting the hitherto neglected ideas of Gustav Shpet but in illustrating how rich the Russian intellectual past is and how many hidden treasures it still contains. The forthcoming publication of the proceedings in the journals Slavica occitania and Voprosy filosofii promises to be one of the most important scholarly events of 2008.