Contini, Gianfranco

Contini, Gianfranco (Domodossola, 1912–1990) was an Italian philologist, academic and literary critic, considered one of the most important scholars in the fields of Romance and Italian Philology of the 20th century.

After his graduation in Pavia (1932) he studied in Torino and Paris (1934–36). Then he taught French Literature and Romance Philology in the universities of Pisa, Freiburg and Florence.

Amongst Contini’s main contributions and critical editions (the latter mainly in the field of Old Italian literature) are the first complete edition of Italian poetry of the 13th century (*Poeti del Duecento*, 1960), his essays about Dante Alighieri (*Un’idea di Dante*, 1970), and his studies about the methodology of text editing (in Italian “ecdotica”, in French “ecdotique”) and textual criticism (*Breviario di ecdotica*, 1986). Contini also devoted himself to the study and valorisation of Italian poets and writers of the 20th century, such as Eugenio Montale and Carlo Emilio Gadda.

The Italian school of philology, of which Contini is an eminent member, can be called neo-Lachmannian (in a different meaning than that given by Ben Salemans to this term). This school is characterised by the combination of a historicist / reconstructionist methodology with a strong interest in linguistics, codicology, history of manuscripts. The Italian school remained mostly immune to French Bédierism and French-American New philology.

Contini coined the concept diffraction.

Works by Contini


Works on Contini