The Sixty-First Season of the
# TORONTO RENAISSANCE AND REFORMATION COLLOQUIUM
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in co-operation with the Emilio Goggio Chair in Italian Studies

## Prof. Laura Ingallinella
## (University of Toronto)

## Petrarch's Sisters:
## History and (Fake) Women's Literature in Early Modern Italy

Thursday, 5 February 2026, 4:00–5:30 pm (EST; Toronto time)
Location: Carr Hall 404, 100 St Joseph Street, Toronto, and online at https://www.youtube.com/@uoftitalian

This talk traces the long and curious life of a woman who never existed. Beginning with a supposed correspondence with Petrarch, she appears and reappears over more than two centuries in Italy and France under new identities — Ortensia di Guglielmo, Giustina Levi-Perotti, Justine de Lévis — each supported by spurious stories, forged poems, and scholarly enthusiasm. Following the development of this myth, this talk will show how early modern communities used counter-canons and gendered expectations — especially anxieties surrounding women who write—to forge bonds of friendship, negotiate authority, and make histories.

LAURA INGALLINELLA is an Assistant Professor of Italian Studies at the University of Toronto. Her research explores the intersection of identity formation and literary expression in late medieval and early modern Italy, with particular attention to gender, race, and class. Her work has appeared in *I Tatti Studies in the Renaissance*, *Forum Italicum*, *Bibliotheca Dantesca*, and several other journals; and her translation of Goro Dati's La Sfera was published in October 2025 with Italica Press. She is currently completing her first monograph, *The Fraudulent Muse: Gender and Literary Forgery in Early Modern Italy* and co-editing an interdisciplinary collection on race in premodern Italy, *Crossroads of Difference*, under contract with ACMRS Press.

Image: Detail from the frontispiece of Giovanni Filippo Tomasini, *Petrarcha redivivus*, 2nd ed. (Padua, 1650)