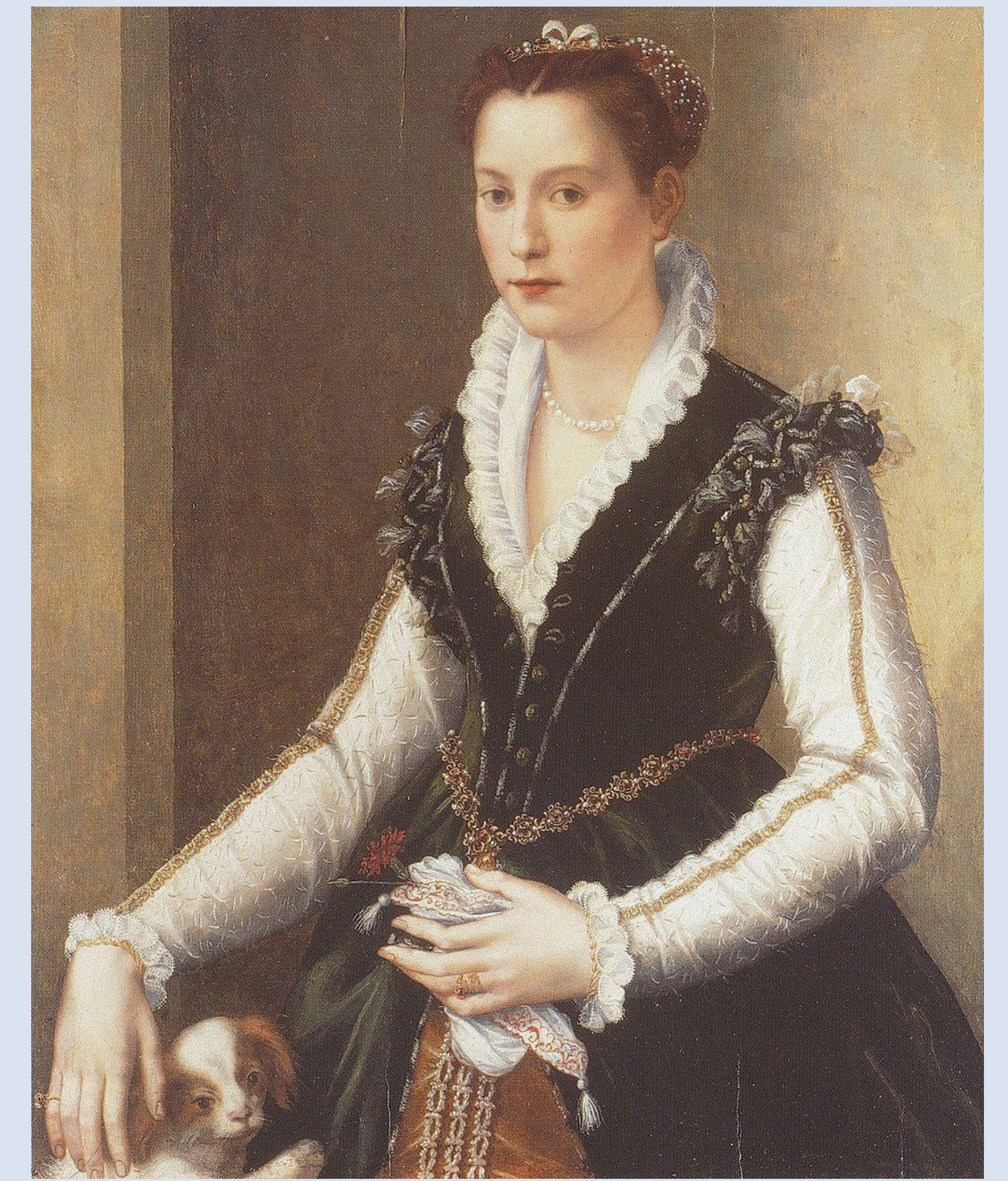


# Fashion and Beauty of the Renaissance: England and Italy

Alexis Litteken, Lindenwood University

## Setting the Stage of the Renaissance

The Renaissance is a period following the Middle Ages known for its massive reinvigoration of the arts, sciences, philosophy, and politics. These areas all had an impact on the culture of the time, especially in fashion and beauty. This presentation will specifically focus on women's fashion and beauty of the 16th century.



## Renaissance in England: Fashion and Beauty

The aristocracy and royalty were the most influential on the popular fashions of the period. The 16th century is particularly known for the reign of the Tudors, and no Tudor might have made more of an impact on fashion than Elizabeth I. Pale skin, high foreheads, and the classic heart-shaped hairstyle were all popular components of Elizabethan beauty standards. Iconic silhouettes were made up of the farthingale, ruff, extremely wide sleeves, and especially elongated waist. Throughout the 16th century, clothing was highly impacted by gender roles and economic status. Biblical interpretations had a large influence on both fashion and beauty of the time.

## Renaissance in Italy: Fashion and Beauty

As in England, the aristocracy and royalty were incredible influences on fashion and beauty. The Medici family in particular are known for their impact on fashion, amongst other spheres such as economics and politics. The feminine look was also based on Renaissance art, encouraging figures and appearances like that of Botticelli's *The Birth of Venus*. A more natural look was popular in terms of beauty, and Italy's beauty standards included pale skin, rosy cheeks, light hair, and dark eyes. Due to Italy's warmer Mediterranean climate, clothing appears lighter in weight, though layers were still certainly the norm.