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Sleuths probe 16th-century murder mystery

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Police in Sicily have called in an international team of forensic scientists and criminologists to help solve the case of a murdered Baroness, 447 years after the crime.

The investigation in Carini — a small town near Palermo — centres on the castle where Baroness Laura Lanza was killed in 1563 with her lover Ludovico Vernagallo when they were caught in bed together.

“Justice wasn’t done back then,” said Gaetano La Fata, Mayor of Carini, who has decided to reopen the case and exhume the remains of the lovers.

“We hope that DNA tests and criminal profiling will help us discover the motive behind the crime and establish whether there was more than one assassin,” he told Reuters.

The Baroness’s father Cesare confessed to the honour killing in a letter to the king, which is currently archived in the Chiesa Madre church in Carini.

“Legend has it, however, that Cesare Lanza did not act alone, but was helped by his son-in-law, Don Vincenzo La Grua,” said the Mayor.

Rumours passed down through generations of Sicilians have it that the husband was motivated by plans to marry again. La Grua may also have feared his rival, Vernagallo, would attempt to claim financial rights for fathering children with his wife. (Reuters)

