

# L'imperatore Federico ed il sultano al-Kamil

di  
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For harp and string quartet

I have always had the desire to convey in music what is most authentic in the character of the Sicilians, without stereotypes or clichés, and what better example of this imaginary encounter that pacified, without a blow being struck, two such distant and hostile worlds to one another?

Emperor Frederick II of Swabia, grandson of Barbarossa, and Sultan al-Malik al-Kamil, grandson of Saladin, one the natural enemy of the other: they managed to avoid war through diplomacy and friendship, defying the rules of their respective worlds in the name of common sense.

Unfortunately, this decision was not liked by either the Church or the Muslim religious authorities, and although they tore down the walls and redistributed the holy places to their respective faiths, those walls are once again standing, and the war continues to tear apart the Holy Land even today. I don't want to understand this quintet as program music, just this suggestion will suffice:

*“On February 18th, 1229, in Jaffa, Emperor Frederick and Sultan al-Kamil, in the name of friendship and common sense, avoided a war driven only by the selfishness of the powerful, without even a single confrontation, tearing down the walls of Jerusalem to make it a free city and returning all the holy places to their rightful faiths. Frederick was Sicilian, but in doing so, al-Kamil also demonstrated that he was. I urge everyone, when the time comes, to be Sicilian like them.”*

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