

LEGEND AND FOLKLORE SYMBOLS:

REYNARD the fox

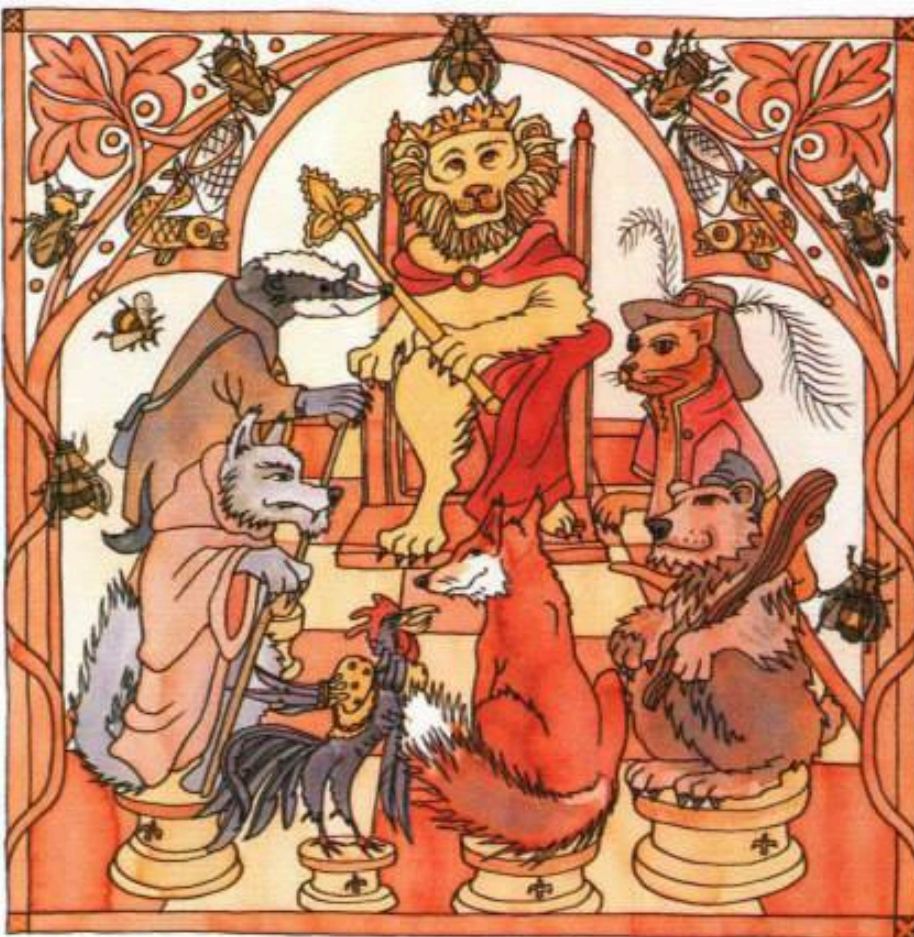
The tales of Reynard the Fox were recorded around the 10th–11th centuries, although they are probably far older, and quickly spread through France, Germany and Holland.

Reynard the Fox was an animal of clever cunning, bravery and wisdom. His story begins with the animals of the kingdom gathered before their noble sovereign, the Lion, discussing the absent Reynard and complaining about his constant tricks. Reynard's nephew, Grimbart the Badger, attempts to defend his uncle – until Chanticleer the Cock arrives bearing a hen the Fox has slaughtered. Bruin the Bear and Tibert the Cat are sent to fetch Reynard, who tricks them into returning empty-handed.

A battle of wits

Reynard visits court to have his fun and he fools the Lion into jailing many of the animals. When his trickery is discovered he is ordered to fight Isengrim the Wolf; Reynard wins by covering himself in butter so he is too slippery to hold. The wily Fox is then appointed the sovereign's councillor.

Animals in folklore represented qualities people wished to emulate or dispense.



THE SYMBOLISM OF REYNARD

There are many other tales of Reynard, which reveal symbols associated with him and the animals he encounters.



According to one narrative Reynard promises to give a magical glass globe to the queen

Be inspired by Reynard's inventiveness next time you want to do well at something like fishing.

of the land, in which anything in any realm can be seen. The glass never arrives for it only existed in Reynard's imagination. This led to an old saying "Your gift was like Reynard's globe", which means an empty promise.



In another tale, the wily Fox tricks Bruin the Bear and eats all his honey, one of Reynard's favourite things. He then

convinces Bruin that he had eaten it himself while he was sleeping!



Reynard persuaded Isengrim the Wolf to use his tail as a fishing rod, so that Reynard could make a good catch.

What all these stories have in common is the Fox's ingenuity and courage to put his wayward plans into action.