

Key features in 'The Emblem of England's Distraction' (1658)

Students could be given cards from the left-hand column as a first step, enabling them to pick out and describe particular features before trying to match them to the suggested explanations. You could just provide the explanations of each element for students to link to the relevant part of the image. Some could be replaced with blank cards so that students suggest the meaning themselves.

Particular aspects of the image	The message it was intended to convey
Cromwell dressed in armour is standing between two great pillars	Cromwell is a man of strength Pillars of Hercules
Noah's ark steering between two rocks labelled Scylla and Charybdis	Cromwell has steered England through terrible dangers (like Noah through the flood – or like Odysseus between a clashing rocks.
The ark landed safely on Mount Ararat and the sun beaming down on it.	Just as God guided Noah's Ark safely to high ground after the flood, God has helped Cromwell guide England to safety.
A flying dove carrying an olive branch	An olive branch is a sign of peace - brought by Oliver. The dove sent by Noah brought an olive twig as a sign that the flood was ending.
The Latin words ' <i>Floreat Protector et Parliamentam Angliae</i> '	A prayer that the Protector and the Parliament of the English may flourish.
Three kneeling figures (with a flag) who offer Cromwell a wreath of laurel leaves.	The 3 kingdoms of England, Scotland and Ireland recognise Cromwell's military victories and the peace he has restored.
An angel, labelled 'Fame' blowing a trumpet	Cromwell's military victories over the enemies of God have brought him fame and glory.
A scroll carved on the pillar with the words ' <i>Magna Charta</i> ' and ' <i>Salus Populi Suprema Lex</i> '	As Protector, Cromwell rules <i>for</i> the people: their safety is the highest law. His rule is limited by promises made in Magna Carta.

The 'Whore' (prostitute) of
Babylon lying defeated under
Cromwell's foot.

Cromwell has defeated the Church's greatest
enemy.

A serpent (snake) labelled 'Error'
and Faction' trodden under
Cromwell's foot.

Cromwell has destroyed people who spread
untrue ideas about God and who plot
together in groups against others.

A shepherd under an olive tree
playing tunes to his sheep and
another man harvesting grapes

With Cromwell as Protector people can live
in peace again – the countryside will be safe,
secure and happy.

A man guiding a plough that is
being pulled along by a horse.

With Cromwell as Protector, people can live
peacefully, farming the land again.

A soldier's helmet that has been
turned into a hive for a swarm of
bees

With Cromwell as Protector weapons of war
will no longer be needed – and can be put to
peaceful use. Under Cromwell's rule

Two men wearing priests clothes
and hats, one carrying a dark
lantern

Cromwell is needed as Protector because of
enemies like the Jesuit (Catholic) priests
secretly plotting.

A man with bellows trying to set
light to barrels of gunpowder

Cromwell is needed as a Protector against
dangerous Catholics (who once tried to blow
up Parliament)

Several men with pickaxes trying
to hack down the rock on which
the pillar is built.

The country still faces dangerous enemies
trying to destroy its foundations – but with
Cromwell it will stand firm.

A noose hanging from the gallows
with the words
'*Proditorum finis funis*'

The words 'The rope is the end of traitors'
shows that under Cromwell, traitors against
the country will be brought to justice.