Appendix 3
Visual Assessment and Analysis for primary sources (2b)

This assessment was done in discussion sections and was ungraded.

Instructions to AIs:

*Beowulf* is so rich, that there are a staggering number of ways to approach it, but I’m going to suggest that you could simply have students work with the text and the themes that are presented in it. If they think of *Beowulf* as a work of instruction, what would that be like? One way to do this would be to have the students draw pictures of the hero as depicted in *Beowulf.* They’ll hate that, because the ones who don’t like to draw will insist that they aren’t able to draw well enough to do this. But they could draw a stick figure. I will supply you with a drawing of Hrothgar with labels that should ease their fears—it will be drawn as crudely as I can manage!

So here’s what they’d draw—what a hero looks like to this audience based on what they find in *Beowulf.* They should be able to point to passages that support the elements in their pictures (I’ll do that too in my drawing). Then they could discuss/present their pictures. Please have them put their names on the pages and collect them, but assure them that they won’t be graded except as evidence of participation.

In groups, if you have time, they could then draw what an unheroic figure would look like. What would such a figure look like? They might depict such a person running away (like Beowulf’s followers at the end) or drinking and boasting, or killing kin. They could also do this by listing, but drawing would have them draw on the right sides of their brains. Whether they draw or list, the rule has to be that they can’t include something unless they have a passage in *Beowulf* to support its inclusion. (I want to keep them thinking of the evidence.)
Faculty modeling:

Student Example

Student examples:
As this was a very large class, student drawings were sampled. The average number of items each student illustrated from the text was 12; some students provided as many as 30, while some provided as few as six. Of these twelve, 4 items (roughly) related to plot elements (things that happened in the story); 2 items related to physical prowess; 1 item dealt with role (things that were expected of Beowulf because of his social position); and 2 with character traits; the other 2 items were more assorted, such as swords and other objects. The difficulty is that the areas where students focused—the plot and physical traits—were not particularly specific to the Anglo-Saxon period. Many (western) heroes kill dragons. So focusing on these kinds of traits will not help students understand what is contextual and time-bound in Beowulf. This showed how students were reading the text, however. So students need to be pointed toward illustrating points that are specific to Anglo-Saxon society and particularly to social relationships and the character traits that are prized.