when Quetzalcoatl was born of Xochiquetzal in Cholula. Unlike central Mexican sources, such as the *Leyenda de los Soles* (Códice Chimalpohuca 1945, f. 3), only four eras (or Suns) are narrated in the Codex Vaticanus A, as discussed by Quiñones Keber (1996).

The proposed interpretation of cosmological dates based on their importance as markers of ceremonial activities in the tonalpohualli undermines many assumptions regarding fixed mythological narratives. Ceremonial behavior, historical or circumstantial occasions, and even specific localities are important in determining the iconography and outlook of pictographic images. In this respect, some specific information in a section that relates the life and deeds of Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl in the Codex Vaticanus A ties the manuscript to the southern Puebla region, near Huitziltepec and the Mazateca. In folios 5r and 10v, it is said that Quetzalcoatl’s followers included Xelhua, who is credited with the construction of the Great Pyramid of Cholula, the Tlachihualtepetl. In Section 3.4, Xelhua was mentioned as the leader of the Nonoalca, a Nahua group that settled in modern-day southern Puebla and founded the towns of Tehuacán, Teotitlán, and Cozcatlán. Archaeological data indicates that this region is one of the possible places of origin for some of the ancient religious manuscripts. Furthermore, in folio 9v, the departure of Quetzalcoatl is specifically tied to Venus and its periodic disappearance into the sun, another observation that ties the Codex Vaticanus A to southern Puebla, a region renowned for its skywatchers. Both details seem to confirm that the Codex Vaticanus A was produced based on specific and regional information that was eventually turned into a more general mythological tale. In another section of the Codex Vaticanus A (ff. 60v–61r), the annotators explicitly state that some information on traditional clothing was gathered in the southern regions of the Mixteca and Zapoteca in Oaxaca.

Calendrics, divination, and ceremony merge in a very interesting last aspect of the trecena 1 Flower in the Codex Telleriano-Remensis. In folio 10v, Pedro de los Ríos (Hand 3) writes, “they said [there was] an omen in the year of one rabbit [1 Rabbit], on the day one rose [1 Flower], that a rose blossomed in the earth and then withered” (Quiñones Keber 1995, 259). This information is reiterated on the following page, where the friar specifies that, every eight years, there was an eight-day fast before the day 1 Flower that was observed by eating only “bread [presumably tortillas] and water” (Codex Telleriano-Remensis, f. 11r). The friar further stated that “in this year of 1562 on July 23 the feast was celebrated” (f. 11r). Later, on one of the last and hastily compiled pages in the annals in folio 49r, he again writes that the the feast was held in the year 5 Rabbit and on the day 1 Flower (July 23, 1562). In this instance, Pedro de los Ríos attaches to the commemoration of 1 Flower (Ce Xochitl) an omen of a blossoming flower from the Huasteca, a Nahua-speaking region towards the Gulf Coast, in the modern state of Veracruz. While this information is internally coherent, it does not align with Caso’s chronology, according to which 1562 was the year 5 Rabbit but July 23 was 5 Rain. Furthermore, in the veintena section of the same manuscript (f. 1v), the feast of Atamalcaliztli, as the fasting of bread and water was known among the Nahua, is said to have occurred in Tenochtitlan during the year 2 Flint (1520), concurrent with the veintena of Huiecuteuilhuitl. In Caso’s chronology, July 23 was 5 Rain in the year 2 Flint, during the veintena of Huiecuteuilhuitl. If Atamalcaliztli was celebrated every eight years, an observation also found in the Sahagunite sources, then it would always fall in the same yearbearer: either Rabbit or Flint, but not both. Finally, day 1 Flower may refer more to the floral symbolism of the day sign in relation to the blossoming of a flower on that day than any calendrical calculation. One also wonders if Pedro de los Ríos relied on a calendar in use in the Huasteca that was different from the more widely accepted one in central Mexico.

7.2. The Codices Tudela and Magliabechiano

The case of the two manuscripts titled after their European owners, the Spanish Tudela and the Italian Magliabecchi, is similar to that of the Codices Telleriano-Remensis and Vaticanus A in that the Codex Magliabechiano is a copy of the Codex Tudela, as Batalla Rosado (2002, ch. 6) demonstrated. The former features a clean look and juxtapositions between written texts and painted images. By contrast, frequent annotations and redactions are found around images in the latter. The Codex Magliabechiano was predominantly glossed by a single hand; a second scribe added only a few annotations (Boone 1983, 28). Thus, this is another instance in which a comparison of two manuscripts clarifies the process of knowledge production about “ancient” (mostly Nahua) religion and customs in a colonial context. Rather than searching for an original or a presumably unadulterated Mesoamerican god, myth, ritual, or ceremony, the present discussion is mainly concerned with a critical combined reading of the colonial sources themselves. The intellectual demands and ideological aims of the friars must be addressed to understand their impact on the Indigenous (again, mostly Nahua) presentation of Mesoamerican religion primarily shown in the pictorials.

The two manuscripts differ from the Codices Telleriano-Remensis and Vaticanus A in that greater attention is given to the written explanation of rituals and ceremonies. Texts and glosses were drafted by a single author in the Codex Tudela, according to Batalla Rosado (2002, 79–88). He was also responsible for the long text found at the end of the manuscript (ff. 90–125), which focuses on explaining the tonalpohualli. Batalla believes that the annotator of the manuscript, who remains anonymous, was not a priest or a friar given his generally descriptive and neutral stance with respect to the rituals that he described. Furthermore, compared to the two previously discussed colonial manuscripts, mythology appears to have been of no interest to the annotator, who maintained a close adherence to the images rather than complementing them with narrative tales. Remarkably, as seen below, divination
was also not a main concern. Overall, the authors of the Codices Tudela and Magliabechiano demonstrated a very different approach from those of the Codices Telleriano-Remensis and Vaticanus A, in which the representation and description of religious or ceremonial customs is either limited or entirely absent. It is possible that the lay nature of the Codex Tudela’s commission dictated not only the topics treated but also their portrayal in the manuscript. The descriptive approach rarely attempts to interpret the meaning “behind the image”—that is, its divinatory or mythological significance.

The two manuscripts contain the same sections but in a different order. Although some parts of the Codex Tudela were reordered at a later date, according to Batalla (2002, 16–22, 48–50), their original placement differed from what was eventually adopted in the Codex Magliabechiano. In both cases, the tonalpohualli is located right before the description of the veintena cycle and after the initial section on ritual cloaks. After the veintena section, there is a list and description of different gods, including, most notably, the gods of pulque (the fermented beverage obtained from agave) and different rituals. Finally, the Codex Tudela closes with a depiction of the years of the solar calendar (xiuhtli).

Table 2 provides a brief comparison of the changes that occurred between the Codices Tudela and Magliabechiano. In the Codex Tudela the section on the counting of the years (xiuhtli) is found at the end of the book, while in the Codex Magliabechiano it was moved right after the one on the tonalpohualli. In the process, the Codex Magliabechiano’s author opted to separate the calendars and the ceremonies, which are kept more closely related in the Codex Tudela.

7.2.1. Ritual cloaks

According to the reconstruction proposed by Batalla, the depiction of ritual cloaks (mantas rituales in Spanish) comprised the first chapter in the original arrangement of the Codex Tudela; they are also the topic of the first section of the Codex Magliabechiano. There are only a few differences in the images of this section in the two manuscripts. Each page depicts either six (the Codex Tudela) or four cloaks (the Codex Magliabechiano), which are painted as horizontal rectangles of the same size. Cloaks, which are known in Nahuatl as tilmatli (sing.), are found in colonial manuscripts as prized tribute items (Codex Mendoza, ff. 17v–56v) and summarily described as the attire of lords in Primeros Memoriales (ff. 55v–56r) and the Florentine Codex (Sahagún 1950–1982, bk. 8, ch. 8–9). As remarked by Seler (1902, 509–619), there are many iconographic commonalities between representations of the cloaks in the two codices under discussion and the Nahua terminology of the Sahagüin sources. Anders and Jansen (1996a, 141–142, 156) suggested a systematic comparison of the cloaks’ outstanding iconographic features with mantic symbols in the trecenas of the Codex Borbonicus. In the Codices Tudela and Magliabechiano, the cloaks are placed before the tonalpohualli. As we shall briefly see, the depiction of the tonalpohualli in these manuscripts differs from all other extant representations of the 260-day calendar. Its close proximity to the ritual mantles may indicate a different aspect of the divinatory calendar that is unique to these two sources. Brief texts introduce the series of cloaks and provide clues about their significance and even placement in the manuscripts:

These are the makes of the mantles dedicated to the demons and each lord and nobleman used to wear them for the festivals and keep them in remembrance of the demons to which they were dedicated. (estas son hechuras de mantas dedicadas a los demonios y cada uno de los señores y principales se las vestían en las fiestas y las tenían en memoria de los demonios a quien eran dedicadas; Codex Tudela, f. 85v; Batalla Rosado 2002, 426, translation by author)

The texts clarify that the mantles were used in the ceremonies of the veintenas discussed later in the books. The text from the Codex Tudela further states that the cloaks were specifically worn for these occasions and then kept to commemorate the celebrations. The Codex Magliabechiano adds that each festival was celebrated in specific periods. In Catholic liturgy, octavas are the eight days of observance for a festivity—most commonly Corpus Christi, but also Holy Week. The annotations suggest both performative and commemorative uses for the mantles. I believe that this is how their presence at the beginning of the books should be understood. The act of wearing a cloak and other paraphernalia means impersonating and becoming a god. Their representation is more than an iconographic clue that was intended to aid the identification of the gods in the following section. Rather, it is a statement on the transformative and creative quality of performance and the role that cloaks and other objects play in it. The mantles with the jaguar spots and other black stains, probably hule (liquid rubber), in folios 86r, 86v, and 87v of the Codex Tudela (Fig. 7.6) and folios
4r, 5r, and 6r of the Codex Magliabechiano recall María Sabina’s vivid description of her ability to transform into a jaguar by recognizing the spots left by the charcoal on her huipil (discussed in Section 4.1). Furthermore, the Codex Magliabechiano’s glosses in this section repeatedly mention Macuilxochitl, 5 Flower, the Mesoamerican god of feasting, and Ometochtli, 2 Rabbit, the god of pulque and altered states—a topic that I elaborate on below. They also mention Quetzalcoatl and Tezcatlipoca, the two major gods related to visionary powers.

Finally, one mantle occupies an entire page in folio 83v of the Codex Tudela and folio 7r of the Codex Magliabechiano (Fig. 7.7). The image, which was left uncolored in the Codex Tudela, represents a turkey impaled on a stick and diagonally positioned on the page/mantle. Fire bursts from the lower portion of the page, while scattered or flying obsidian flints occupy the top part of the image. The gloss in the Codex Tudela explains that this was how turkeys were roasted, while the one in the Codex Magliabechiano states that this is the cloak of the devil’s fire (manta del fuego del diablo). The turkey is tied to the reed with white ropes decorated with cotton balls and feathers, an iconographic element usually associated with sacrificial victims. The turkey is a manifestation of Tezcatlipoca, which may also be referenced by the obsidian flints. This is the last mantle depicted in the Codex Tudela, but it remains unclear why the section closes with this imposing
but unfinished depiction. By contrast, the tlacuilo of the Codex Magliabechiano continues with more illustrations of cloaks and a different arrangement (Fig. 7.8). On the reverse side of the turkey mantle (f. 7v), there are four mantles decorated with a different representation or symbol: fire, rabbit, wind, and water. The first three are also found in the Codex Tudela, but they are placed alongside another cloak with a solar disk. All these symbols (fire, rabbit, wind, water, and the sun) relate to the Suns (i.e., successive creations) known through distinct colonial sources, such as the Codex Vaticanus A, previously discussed. In this context, the large mantle with the turkey burnt by fire can be understood as a reference to the third Sun (4 Rain), which, according to most sources, ended in a rain of fire and whose inhabitants were turned into turkeys (Moreno de los Arcos 1967, 191). If these scattered references are correct, the cloaks would have, in addition to the previously mentioned performative function, a very different meaning or purpose, indicating a rather implicit cosmological narrative.

The depiction of mantles as ritual objects and cosmological symbols suggests a tension between the performative and transformative aspects of clothing and the intention to convey a mythical narrative. As previously argued, these two divergent approaches to the representation of Mesoamerican religion may derive from different agendas in the production of the manuscripts. On the one hand, the friars were more interested in explanatory statements, such as myths and mantic readings; on the other hand, Indigenous artists and the pictographic medium itself were more concerned with the pragmatics of ritual and the correspondences suggested by the inner workings of the tonalpohualli. In other words, explicit statements on mythology and cosmology reflected the needs of a readership that was unfamiliar with Mesoamerican religion and thus required a clear diagrammatic explanation of it. Conversely, as a quintessential Mesoamerican form of expression, pictography was not intended to be illustrative but rather useful in a ceremonial context. Their serviceability ultimately made them pliable to reworking and interpretation.

Although it is ultimately impossible to know how the people involved in the production of the manuscripts interacted with and mutually influenced one another, it is important to bear in mind that the Indigenous intellectuals and artists who contributed to them were born after the
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conquest and most likely had been educated by the same friars with whom they eventually collaborated. This aspect of Indigenous manuscript production is investigated at greater length in the next chapter dedicated to the work of Sahagún. The encyclopedic Sahaguntine project contains many images that were produced by Indigenous painters and that nevertheless played a much more ancillary and illustrative role than those in the Codices Telleriano-Remensis, Vaticanus A, Tudela, and Magliabechiano.

7.2.2. The tonalpohualli and the veintenas

The Codex Tudela (ff. 90r–124r) treats the 260-day calendar through elaborate pictorials and lengthy written explanations based on a four-part division of the tonalpohualli and associations with trees and pairs of patron gods (Jansen 1986, Batalla Rosado 2002, 374–385). In the text, divination and ritual activity are accorded the same importance. Day signs are noted not only in terms of the fate of whoever was born on that day but also in terms of the type of sacrifice that the person was required to make. This indicates that mantic images had equally predictive and prescriptive functions.

The corresponding section in the Codex Magliabechiano (ff. 11r–14r) beautifully but rather simply renders the twenty day signs of the tonalpohualli, each accompanied by a numeral from one to thirteen. The count begins with the day 1 Flint (Fig. 7.9) rather than the expected 1 Crocodile. While Batalla Rosado (2002, 379) considered this detail a simplification of the original section in the Codex Tudela, whose calendrics was seemingly too complex for the copyist of the Codex Magliabechiano to master, Anders and Jansen (1996a, 157) proposed instead that the manuscript was drafted on a year that began on a day Flint, which also establishes the veintena count for that year. I find this suggestion to be interesting and worthy of consideration. While the canonical reading of the calendar seems to imply that there is a first day in the calendar, the 260-day calendar does not have any fixed correlation with the solar and vague year, and day 1 Crocodile may fall at any point of the year. Among contemporary Maya K’iche’ communities, no day is universally considered to be the first of the chol q’ij, although there is general agreement that 8 B’atz’ (8 Monkey) may be counted as the first (Akker 2018, 33–34). The annotation in folio 13v related to this section seems to confirm Anders and Jansen’s hypothesis:

Figure 7.8. Ritual cloaks. Codex Magliabechiano, f. 7v. Florence, Biblioteca nazionale centrale, Banco Rari, 232.

These figures of this part, which are those just mentioned, which are twenty, are the twenty days of each festival, which are painted later. They had them in order to name one who was born in these days ... (Boone 1983, 177).

The annotator is clearly referring to the veintena festivals that had a close relationship with the solar year and would in fact fall on a specific set of twenty day signs in any given year, as discussed at length in this book. In the Codex Magliabechiano, the specific time of the manuscript’s production had a bearing on the drafting of the calendar, while the Codex Tudela adheres to a standard depiction, beginning with day Crocodile on folio 98v. The following pages in the Codex Magliabechiano depict the xiuhmolpilli, the cycle of fifty-two years. This placement seemingly departs from the original arrangement in the Codex Tudela, in which the counting of the years is positioned at the end of the book. As for its depiction, both codices represent the entire fifty-two-year cycle from year 1 Reed to 13 Rabbit. An explanatory text in folio 14v of the Codex Magliabechiano introduces the counting of the years with another reference to the veintena ceremonies that were celebrated over the course of the solar year.

I believe that this provides sufficient proof that the painters and annotators of this manuscript had a specific narrative and content structure that they wanted to develop and that its focus was the ceremonial aspect of the Mesoamerican calendar (i.e., how days and time periods were celebrated and counted). In this respect, there is a clear shift from a divinatory function assigned to the pictograms and their arrangement to a ceremonial and descriptive one. While the illustrative purpose of these manuscripts should not be underestimated, I have argued throughout this book that the current divinatory paradigm applied in the study of the codices has perhaps wrongly underestimated other less pragmatic but more self-reflexive aspects of Mesoamerican religious pictography and the calendar—namely, a ceremonial, commemorative, or even prophetic function.

The counting of the years (xiuhmolpilli) in both manuscripts begins with the year 1 Reed, an unusual date for Nahua manuscripts, which more commonly used either 1 Rabbit or 2 Reed. The reason seems to be of a historical and transcendental nature because glosses in both codices (Tudela, f. 77v, and Magliabechiano, f. 14v) explicitly refer to the arrival of Cortés in Mesoamerica in the year 1 Reed or 1519 (entró el Marqués del Valle a esta tierra). Given the complete lack of historical contents in
the Codices Tudela and Magliabechiano, in contrast to the Codices Telleriano-Remensis and Vaticanus A, the religious overtones of the date year 1 Reed as a marker of a new beginning should not be underestimated. In the Codices Telleriano-Remensis and Vaticanus A, the year 1 Reed is associated with Quetzalcoatl and the tale of his return after his disappearance in the eastern sea. While all these documents offer the earliest pictographic depictions and accounts of the events surrounding the conquest, they were produced at least one generation after the fact and drafted by artists and friars who had not witnessed them firsthand. Thus, they are indicative of the perception of momentous historical events in a later period.

7.2.3. Xochilhuitl and the pulque gods

One of the most interesting aspects of the Codices Tudela and Magliabechiano are the godly and ceremonial scenes that follow the veintenas section. At the closing of the yearly ceremonies (depicted in folios 29r–30r in the Codex Tudela and 46v–48r in the Codex Magliabechiano), Xochipilli, the god of flowers and feasting, is celebrated (Fig. 7.10). He holds a yollotopilli (a heart stick), one of his known attributes. A flowered plant is depicted in front of him, along with his day sign, 7 Flower, and a few eggshells that, according to the annotator of the Codex Magliabechiano, were scattered on the street to celebrate the gods who provided an abundance of eggs. The same manuscript further explains that this occasion was a movable feast (fiesta extravagante), a celebration tied to the tonalpohualli that occurred at different points of the solar year. However, in the following folio in both codices, another day, 1 Flower, is added to the celebration of Xochipilli. 7 Flower and 1 Flower occur twenty days apart, which suggests that this celebration was akin to a veintena.

The day 1 Flower, which corresponds to the fourth trecenta of the tonalpohualli, is a day dedicated to artists and musicians. In the case of the Codex Borbonicus, for example, Quiñones Keber (1987, 191–192) proposed that the explicitly ritual and festive character of the trecenta 1 Flower presided over by Huehuecoyotl may indeed be the representation of the festival of flowers (Sahagún 1950–1982, bk. 2, 36, bk. 5, 25–27) in the tonalamatl section of the manuscript. In the Codices Tudela and Magliabechiano, there appears to be a close relationship between this particular movable feast and the previous section devoted to the veintenas. In this light, Xochilhuitl (the Feast of Flowers) paradigmatically becomes a feast dedicated to feasting. Moreover, as noted in Section 3.3, the presentation of the feast of 1 Flower as a movable feast right after the “fixed” solar celebrations of the veintenas also seems to suggest that the relationship between solar or seasonal phenomena and the tonalpohualli was noteworthy. The xihuitl and the tonalpohualli were one calendar, rather than two working in sync. In a few sources, namely Cristóbal del Castillo’s Nahuatl chronicle (Castillo 2001, ch. 71, 167–168) and the Códice de Huichapan (Caso 1967, 222), which hails from the Otomi town of the same name in the modern state of Hidalgo, Xochilhuitl is mentioned as a veintena that falls in December, replacing Izcalli or Tititl. In the Codices Tudela and Magliabechiano, Xochilhuitl is placed right after Tititl.

Several representations of the pulque gods, which are disparagingly described as “gods of drunkenness”
(dioses de la borrachera), follow the feast of flowers. “Drunkenness” is a misguided term that betrays a deep misunderstanding of the role and importance of pulque and its gods in a ritual context. Instead, I propose interpreting the pulque gods as representatives of a cult that was closely related to the visionary powers of the drink (Wasson 1980, 93–103, Ashwell 2006, 93–103). The eleventh trecena of the tonalpohualli (1 Monkey) is presided over by Patecatl, the god of pulque, in the Codex Telleriano-Remensis (f. 15v). An annotation on this page explains that he “is the lord of these thirteen days and of certain roots that they put in the wine, for without these roots they could not become drunk no matter how much they would drink” (Quiñones Keber 1995, 263). These roots are depicted in a ritual found in both codices under discussion (Fig. 7.14), as elaborated below. They are substances added to the drink to make it powerful and able to induce visions.

Pulque gods in the Codices Tudela and Magliabechiano are explicitly related to several localities in the modern state of Morelos, such as Tepoztlan and Yautepec, where Ome Tochtli and his many manifestations were venerated as local patrons (Codex Tudela, f. 32r, Anders and Jansen 1996a, 185). According to Mendieta (1973, bk. 2, ch. 14), the calendar originated in this region, as discussed in Section 1.2. Therefore, the gods of pulque are strictly related not only to the drink and its visionary powers but also to timekeeping and its devices. Patecatl, depicted among the pulque gods in folio 35r of the Codex Tudela and folio 53r of the Codex Magliabechiano (Fig. 7.11), is shown with many of Quetzalcoatl’s attributes, including a feather headdress, a curved stick, and a shell symbol on his shield.

7.2.4. The ceremonial use of plants

The display of powerful and sacred plants as well as pulque is noteworthy in the two manuscripts’ descriptions of ceremonies. Flowery plants are also prominent at all such occasions, beginning with Xochipilli on the page dedicated to 7 Flower (Codex Tudela, f. 29r, Codex Magliabechiano, f. 47r). As first discussed by Wasson (1973, 305), several words found in colonial sources indicate the “flowery” connotations of plants and ceremonies. First, in the sixteenth-century Nahuatl dictionary by the friar Alonso...
de Molina, *xochinanacatl* (literally, “flowery mushroom”) is translated as “mushroom that causes drunkenness” (*hongo que emborracha*). In the Florentine Codex (Sahagún 1950–1982, bk. 11, ch. 7), the corresponding word is *teonanacatl* (“sacred mushroom”), which identifies mushrooms with psychoactive components. The adjective “flowery,” which is given in Nahuatl by the prefix *xoch-*, is used interchangeably with both “sacred” (*teo-*) and “visionary” (or “drunk” in colonial sources). Thus, the festive nature of the calendar is more accurately reinterpreted as sacred and ceremonial. Rituals include both communal gatherings and night ceremonies, with the latter being of a more private nature. With respect to private ceremonies, Wasson (1973, 324) mentioned the term *temicxoch* (literally “flower of dream”) found in Ruiz de Alarcón’s treatise (Andrews and Hassig 1984, bk. 2, ch. 2, 79). Although the incantation was intended to “induce sleep,” according to the Spanish text, it is more likely related to a state of trance. It is perhaps not a coincidence that the Xochipilli statue studied by Wasson for its detailed depiction of flowers, petals, and pistils came from Tlalmanalco, a town near the region of origin of many of the pulque gods in the two codices under discussion.

Folios 68r, 69r, and 70r in the Codex Tudela and the corresponding folios in the Codex Magliabechiano (i.e., folios 83r, 84r, 85r) prominently display flowering plants, although the information provided by the annotators is scarce or nonexistent. First, in folio 68r in the Codex Tudela (Fig. 7.12), two flowered vine plants grow on a patch of land with outstretched serpents. Guerra (1967, 173) and Anders and Jansen (1996a, 218–219) identified the plant as *ololiuhqui coatlxihuitl* or *coatlxoxouhqui* (green serpent plant; Sahagún 1950–1982, bk. 11, ch. 7), whose seeds have psychoactive properties. The same plant or a piciete (wild tobacco) appears in the next image in folio 69r of the Codex Tudela (Fig. 7.13). It stands between two male priests; one is eating a green substance, while the other is drinking. Finally, in folio 70r (Fig. 7.14), five people (two men and three women) are performing a pulque libation ritual seated around a jar with a foaming white beverage. In the corresponding image in the Codex Magliabechiano (f. 85r), the god of pulque himself is also present. The only gloss and information provided pertain to the bundled roots, which are used to make the *ocpatli* (literally “pulque medicine” or “what makes pulque work”). These images attest that the consumption of pulque was conducted in a ceremonial context by priests on certain occasions, perhaps related to communal festivities. The numerous gray or smoky volutes scattered in front of the two male drinkers on page 69r of the Codex Tudela indicate the words and chants associated with these private events.

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Figure 7.12. *Coatlxoxouhqui* plant. Codex Tudela, f. 68r. Museo de América, Madrid.
Figure 7.13. Two priests eating and drinking in front of a coatlhxoxuhqui plant. Codex Tudela, f. 69r. Museo de América, Madrid.

Figure 7.14. Ritual consumption of pulque. Codex Tudela, f. 70r. Museo de América, Madrid.
The ingestion of sacred plants in relation to priestly knowledge, communal activities, and a festive setting is a common theme on two other pages. In folio 63r of the Codex Tudela (Fig. 7.15), a vessel that contains burning copal (incense) is set on an altar framed by two flowering plants, which appear to have been cut from their roots. A man and a woman are sitting in front of the altar making offerings. The corresponding text in the Codex Magliabechiano (f. 73v) explains,

This is a small place of sacrifice where the Indians offered incense or paper with blood to their gods. It is known that every five times [sic] they had in common a cue or place of sacrifice in which to hold a sacrifice. And for every twenty days they had another larger one that was dedicated to an idol of their gods to whom they were devoted. And each barrio had another large temple where they had another idol, whom they say was guardian of the barrio … (Boone 1983, 213)

As noted by Boone (1983, 213) and Batalla (2002, 312), it is possible that the term veces or veces (times in Spanish) should have read vecino (neighbor), which is shortened as vez. There is indeed a certain confusion and ambiguity in the timing and place of participation in the ritual in question, but perhaps both aspects of the cult were at issue. On the one hand, the cult must be observed every five or twenty days. On the other hand, certain families or neighborhoods were involved. Festivities that took place every five days (macuililhuitl) or twenty days (cempoalilhuitl; Sahagún 1950–1982, bk. 2, Bustamante García and Díaz Rubio 1983) were celebrated differently in each community and various social groups within each community, such as associations of people who practiced the same craft. On the page in question, the tools depicted directly below the altar may represent plastering and scraping tools made of stone and obsidian that were used by masons or papermakers.

Finally, folio 73r in the Codex Tudela (Fig. 7.16; Codex Magliabechiano f. 87r) depicts five penitents engaged in different ceremonial acts with thorns, incense burners, and food and other offerings. The person at the top is casting paper strips soaked in blood into a fire. The five men are expressing their devotion to a god with a large feather headdress seated atop a temple. At the foot of the temple, a blue lizard walks over a white cloth with five dots next to it. The text accompanying the image explains that this ceremony was intended to petition the gods. To understand whether the request would be granted, priests put a straw mat next to the stairway of the temple. If a lizard walked on it, it was taken as a sign that the request
would be granted. The addition of the five dots seems to suggest the day 5 Lizard in the tonalpohualli. However, as observed by Anders and Jansen (1996a, 221–222n7), there is an inherent ambiguity to the representation. The animal is depicted in a transitional status between the iconic value as a day sign and a representational status as the animal carrying the oracular response. The numeral 5 can also be read in two different ways: as the five-day period (macuilxihuitl) dedicated to the oracle and ceremonial quest or as the number of the day. As illustrated in Primeros Memoriales (f. 269; Fig. 7.17), 5 Lizard is one of the names of Macuilxochitl (Sahagún et al. 1997, 120n9, Anders and Jansen 1996a, 221–222n7), whose temples and cults were found around the main
twin pyramids in the sacred precinct. The god illustrated in the Codex Tudela was probably an image such as the one found today at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City (Fig. 7.18), which has the name 5 Serpent carved in the back of its head. Their presence in the pictorials attests to the importance of the cult to the Macuiltonaleque, godly diviners who commanded rituals upon consultation of the sacred books (Pohl 2007). I believe that the tlacuilo deliberately pursued ambiguity by showing that the relationship between the days of the tonalpohualli, divinatory function, or festival days is not fixed but rather constitutes a web of meaning that is always dependent on the act of reading and interpretation.

7.2.5. Gods and ceremonies in folios 89r–92r of the Codex Magliabechiano

After the long section on festivals and ceremonies, a few illustrations of gods and ceremonies that appear in the Codex Magliabechiano are not found in the Codex Tudela, either. Folios 89r–92r (Fig. 7.19 and 7.20) depict several gods in groups of three or four. Boone (1983, 27) argued that the artist responsible for this portion of the manuscripts was the same one who added the cloaks in folios 8 and 9, which are not found in the Codex Tudela. As for the iconography of the gods in this unique section, Anders and Jansen (1996a, 223–224) noted that Tlaloc, Quetzalcoatl, Xiuhtecuhtli, Xipe, Centeotl, and Tezcatlipoca were patron deities of several veintenas, which may indicate that this part of the manuscript was copied from an original fragment that depicted the yearly ceremonial cycle. In folio 89r (Fig. 7.19), a priestly impersonator in the bottom left corner of the page stands out from the others due to the insignia of Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl (Aguilera 1983, 166, Anders and Jansen 1996a, 223). He is encircled by eighteen footprints, which, as Paul van den Akker brought to my attention in a personal communication (2017), may be a reference to the number of veintenas in a year. Thus, the footprints may be

Figure 7.17. The sacred precinct of Tenochtitlan with the gods Macuilcuétpalli (5 Lizard) and Macuilcalli (5 House) presiding over the twin temple. Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España, f. 269r. Paso y Troncoso 1905.
interpreted as the eighteen ceremonies that comprise the yearly cycle and must be completed around Quetzalcoatl, according to his instructions.

Tena (2000, 428–430) followed up on the suggestion that the gods in these last pages of the Codex Magliabechiano relate to the veintena patrons and further developed an idea proposed by Caso (1967, 36, fig. 14), who posited that the five paper offerings that close the section and the book in folio 92r (Fig. 7.20) represent the five nemontemi days. Tena (2000, 429) referred to these representations as “paper offerings” (*amatetehuitl* in Nahuatl). The last one is larger than the others and decorated with a maize outcrop. It should be noted, however, that nemontemi are seldom pictorially represented and therefore not easy to identify despite being consistently cited in written sources.

At the bottom of folio 90r (Fig. 1.15), there is an unusual scene that breaks with the general contents of the section. A man is seated on a straw mat, ingesting mushrooms, as explained in Section 1.3. More red and green mushrooms sprout from a patch of land in front of him, while Mictlantecuhtli, the god of the land of the dead, looms from the back and slightly touches the seated figure. I suggest that this scene, which was seemingly added to a loose representation
of the veintena patron gods, is another instance of the close relationship between visionary experience and the veintena ceremonies. Their planning and correct performance required knowledge derived from the experience of a revelation, as discussed in the previous chapters. The presence of Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl can also be interpreted in this light, as he is the archetypical priest in charge of leading ceremonies.

Boone (1983, 27) previously commented on this unique section of the Codex Magliabechiano and considered that the iconographic complexity of the gods makes it unlikely that they were independent inventions; rather they were copied from a source other than the supposed prototype of the Codex Magliabechiano (presumably the Codex Tudela). Indeed, there is a very interesting comparison to be made with pages 17–22 in the Codex Laud (Fig. 7.21–7.22). A sequence of twenty-two characters is arranged in two rows but without guiding red lines; with one exception, they all face the same direction. The section includes at least one clear reference to the veintena ceremonies on page 17 (Fig. 7.21), presumably at the beginning of the sequence to the right, where Xiuhtecuhtli, the fire god, opens the celebration in the top right corner of the page, followed by another priest drilling a stick in a fire serpent at the bottom. In front of the officiating priest, another character carries a white flag. Both men carry a turquoise diadem, and their body paint identifies them as Paynal and Huitzilopochtli, the main gods of the celebration of Panquetzaliztli, according to the sources. On the following pages, where the retinue appears to reach its final destination in a cave (Fig. 7.22), three characters bear distinctive iconographic attributes. The last one, who holds a burning ball of hule (rubber), can be identified as Tezcatlipoca; behind him follows a man who can be identified as a priest to Xiuhtecuhtli (Anders and Jansen 1994, 253). The rain god Tlaloc, holding a serpent and an ax, is next. Once the offering is placed, the scene (and presumably the ceremonial pilgrimage) ends with four day signs and counted bundled stick offerings, which were left uncolored. In folio 92 of the Codex Magliabechiano, Tezcatlipoca and Tlaloc, possibly related to the celebrations of Teotleco and Tepeihuitl (Anders and Jansen 1996a, 224n10) or Toxcatl and Etzalcualiztli (Tena 2000, 429) appear right before the five paper offerings, which Tena identified as nemontemi. Thus, both codices contain a loose representation of the tutelary gods of the veintenas.
Figure 7.21. Panquetzaliztli and the New Fire ceremony. Codex Laud, p. 17. Kingsborough 1831.

Figure 7.22. Procession to a cave. Codex Laud, pp. 21–22. Kingsborough 1831.
Both the Codices Magliabechiano and Laud may be an original creation of different divinatory or ceremonial images. In the case of the Codex Laud, these images were taken from a lost original, which had presumably already been damaged when the new manuscript was painted. By contrast, the Codex Magliabechiano was copied from the Codex Tudela but lost much of its credibility, according to Batalla Rosado (2010). In both instances, however, the quality and level of detail in the images contradict their presumed fragmentary and lacking contents. Why would an artist invest skills and time to reproduce an incomplete and therefore unusable document? Perhaps we should consider that the result is neither faulty nor inconsistent; indeed, we have yet to understand much of the logic that underlies pictographic image-making in both pre-Hispanic and colonial contexts. Could it be that the seemingly complete image of the eighteen veintenas that we have come to expect from the sources, including the Codex Magliabechiano itself, is not more appropriate for describing the Mesoamerican ceremonial cycles than the fragmentary images found on the pages of the Codices Magliabechiano, Laud, and Borgia?

The main aim of this book is to understand pictography as a cultural expression whose complex inner mechanisms are not a mere reflection or illustration of some external reality but rather able to engender their own meaning. The four documents examined in this chapter belong to a corpus of Mesoamerican religious texts produced during the colonial period that largely adhered to their ancient counterparts. In other words, the images were meant to convey meaning on their own terms and were not ancillary to verbal explanations. The final fate of pictography is the focus of the next and final chapter.
Manuscript Painting and the Conventos

This last chapter is dedicated to the development of pictography once it was fully incorporated into the intellectual project of the friars and their art schools. The four manuscripts discussed in the preceding chapter also form part of the corpus of pictographic and written works produced under mendicant sponsorship. They largely relied, however, on established pre-Hispanic canons, such as those found in the Borgia Group manuscripts. The written text, provided in the form of glosses, is largely subordinate to the images. Written explanations were intended to complement or clarify the meaning of the pictorials, whose overall presentation and composition still conformed to known pre-Hispanic pictographic genres.

By contrast, the work of Bernardino de Sahagún discussed in this chapter was wholly novel, blending European literary antecedents and local pictographic traditions. In particular, the Florentine Codex is widely considered the most important source on Nahua culture, religion, and history at the time of contact and is therefore cited at length in this book. However, the bulk of information in the document is found in the written texts. The Nahua version of the texts, whose complete translation was attempted only once, by North American scholars Arthur Anderson and Charles Dibble (Sahagún 1950–1982), reflects the interests and knowledge of an Indigenous intellectual elite that had been fully educated at mendicant schools. The monumental work of Bernardino de Sahagún is contrasted with the Codex Yanhuitlan, a document produced in the Mixtec town of the same name. The manuscript is fully pictographic and hails from a region in Mesoamerica where picture writing was particularly developed. The Mixtec codices, in fact, constitute the only pre-Hispanic corpus of historical documents that focus on local and regional genealogies. The Codex Yanhuitlan is heir to this tradition, but it also represents a novel genre that fully incorporated a format, a style, and contents derived from European and colonial examples.

Both works have received extensive scholarly attention. Therefore, I focus on specific aspects that demonstrate the scope, impact, and limitations of the mendicant evangelical and educational enterprise in New Spain. On the one hand, the encyclopedic and scholastic endeavor of the Franciscans, which is exemplified by the work of Sahagún, intended to salvage Mesoamerican religion and culture. By portraying it as dead and sealed in the past, not as a living phenomenon. Consequently, books were seen as repositories of fixed knowledge on mythology and rituals, as well as observed in the Codices Telleriano-Remensis, Vaticanus A, Tudela, and Magliabechiano. On the other hand, the Codex Yanhuitlan was produced in an Indigenous town and demonstrates how local Mixtec leaders and artists were able to re-appropriate the pictographic medium from the friars to address the complex socio-political situation in early colonial Yanhuitlan.

One striking aspect of these manuscripts is the innovative and widespread use of monochrome, an artistic development unique to sixteenth-century New Spain that has yet to receive its scholarly due. In Europe, monochrome painting (usually referred to with the term *grisaille*, from French for “gray-like”) was first adopted in manuscript illumination. An outstanding example is the famous Book of Hours produced by Jean Pucelle for Jeanne d’Evreux, the queen of France in the first half the fourteenth century. Eventually, early Netherlandish painters mastered the technique in oil painting, most notably in the decoration of altar wings. Throughout the Renaissance, the grisaille technique was commonly employed to paint architectural decorations and details and to create trompe l’oeil or other similar visual effects. Among the few scholars who have addressed the use of monochrome in the visual arts of New Spain, Manrique (1982) and Peterson (1993, 62–63) considered that the lack of color was a direct consequence of the pedestrian and unoriginal copies of European models that arrived in the New World in the form of prints. Although I believe that the introduction of print illustrations from Europe triggered the production of monochrome images among Indigenous tlacuilos, the selective adoption of grisaille in specific contexts reveals a conscious positioning on the part of local artists vis-à-vis a foreign and imposed tradition.

European art historical scholarship on grisaille has examined it as a representational strategy that engages and asks questions of the viewer (Schoell-Glass 1999). Philippot (1966) noted that the lack of color in early Netherlandish altar wings, which usually depicted fictive sculptures in niches, had the effect of collapsing different levels of reality into a single surface. Fehrenbach (2011) considered that monochrome in early modern marble sculpture constituted a regression of the naturalist Renaissance impulse to a potential state of animation, a moment in which dead and raw materials seemed to come alive and make present what the picture claimed to be. Finally, Powell (2012, 107–111) remarked on the uncanny vivacity of paintings of monochrome sculpture, highlighting a possible paradox; the painted image purports to be a sculpture, but sculpture shows a degree of realism in its expression that one would only expect from the “real” subject. In all these cases, grisaille is employed to implicitly reveal the mechanism by which the image and its life-like and mimetic qualities are created. This is often framed within the debate on the *paragone* (comparison) between the relative merits of architecture, sculpture, and painting. Monochrome manifests a transition or process that the viewer must...