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 trecena 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 trecena 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”
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(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...