

## The Evolution of Early Colonial Pictography

This and the following concluding chapter analyze religious manuscripts produced after the conquest under the sponsorship and guidance of Spanish friars. The Codices Telleriano-Remensis, Tudela, and Magliabechiano and the Florentine Codex have been cited numerous times throughout this book in the interpretation of images and calendrics pertaining to the ancient religious manuscripts. In this chapter, the focus is on their creation in the mid- and late sixteenth century. Although the socio-cultural context of their production can be at least partially reconstructed, unlike the Codices Laud, Borgia, and even Borbonicus, the analysis of the manuscripts' contents, organization, and specific iconography offers the most important clues and insights into the motivations and concerns of the artists and patrons involved.

A comparative analysis of selected post-conquest sources reveals the ways in which Spaniards (primarily friars) and Nahuas participated and interacted in the representation of Mesoamerican religion after the establishment of the colonial order in New Spain. As discussed in the preceding chapters, the Codex Borbonicus is also a post-conquest document, but it was produced before the forceful Christianization of the Indigenous population. Once manuscript painting was co-opted and confined to the *conventos* and their schools, the documents began to serve a different purpose: illustrating Indigenous religion to a foreign and mostly hostile audience. In this respect, the most striking feature of the manuscripts discussed in this chapter is perhaps the novel juxtaposition and relationship between the alphabetic text and pictorial representations—the two poles of European and Mesoamerican understanding of local religion, respectively. I do not mean to argue that alphabetic and pictographic texts were separately produced or that they constitute parallel narratives, a view that has been expressed by authors such as Batalla Rosado (2002) and Magaloni Kerpel (2003a, 2003b) with respect to the Codex Tudela and the Florentine Codex, respectively. However, I attempt to highlight how the inherently different semiosis engendered by Mesoamerican pictography and European alphabetic writing—a topic discussed in the introduction of this book—came to interact and mutually influence each other once they were made to coexist within the same intellectual project. I have already remarked on a peculiar quality of the glosses in, for example, the Codex Borbonicus: they often provide information that is not given or apparent in the images but nonetheless corroborated by other colonial sources.

Two pairs of manuscripts are discussed in this chapter: the Codices Telleriano-Remensis and Vaticanus A, and

the Codices Tudela and Magliabechiano. The dating of these documents is not precisely known, but they were all compiled roughly between 1550 and 1580 and underwent different stages of production. All manuscripts primarily concern Nahua (Aztec) religion and comprise divinatory and ritual sections. The latter aspect is extensively represented by the *veintena* ceremonies. How did history—namely, the fateful events of the conquest and its aftermath—and a certain conception of history affect the way that both divination and ceremonies were represented during the colonial period? Post-conquest pictorial and alphabetic descriptions of Mesoamerican religion, such as those analyzed here, were produced under the supervision of the Spanish friars. Their agenda and purpose were wholly different from those of the creators of pre-Hispanic manuscripts. To understand how different ideas and conceptions operated within these texts, I compare the works as a whole and try to define the overall intellectual project before moving on to a comparison of specific details to account for their differences and possibly competing points of view.

### 7.1. The Codices Telleriano-Remensis and Vaticanus A

The Codex Telleriano-Remensis, a manuscript that details several aspects of Nahua religion and history, may have been drafted in the 1550s and 1560s (Quiñones Keber 1995, 129). The Codex Vaticanus A is largely a “clean” copy of the Codex Telleriano-Remensis, whose sections were partially rearranged, and the glosses were translated into Italian (Quiñones Keber 1995, 130). Painted and written on European paper, both works are also bound like Western books. Although the Codex Vaticanus A's pictorials are decidedly of inferior quality, the codex contains more sections. Its faithful reproduction of the Codex Telleriano-Remensis makes it particularly useful for reconstructing lost pages from the original. Jansen (1984) established that Dominican friar Pedro de los Ríos was responsible for the realization of both documents, which reflect a wide interest in Nahua culture. The manuscripts include sections on mythology, the calendar, divination, ceremonies, and history. With respect to general presentation and layout, Quiñones Keber (1995, 242–243) noted the tripartite arrangement of the Codex Telleriano-Remensis. The *tonalamatl*, which addresses the calendar and divination, can be found between the ceremonial cycle (the *veintenas*) and history (the *annals*). Thus, the gods are the focus of the first part of the manuscript, followed by human and individual destiny (the reading of the *tonalamatl*), and, lastly, the historical and transcendental projection of human and divine action through time. The same author (Quiñones Keber 1995, 242–243)

suggested that this may be an intrinsic pattern in Nahua or Mesoamerican cosmovision rather than an external and imposed European conception. However, no known or extant pre-Hispanic pictographic document includes historical accounts alongside ritual and divination.

The Codex Vaticanus A, which is seemingly a complete version of the Codex Telleriano-Remensis, has a slightly different structure. The manuscript begins with a cosmological and mythological narrative, then presents the tonalamatl, which is primarily concerned with personal fate. The festival cycle of the veintena follows, introduced by a written text on the fifty-two-year cycle in Italian. The manuscript proceeds with a presentation of religious and social customs before closing with the historical section of the annals. Table 1 summarizes and compares the two manuscripts' general layout.

Both documents posit a paradigmatic dichotomy between ceremonial life and divination. The poles of the dichotomy comprise religion and the gods on one side and fate, history, and people's ethnic identity on the other. In the preceding chapters, I argued that ritual and divination are inseparable aspects in the ancient books, which blend clues about ceremonies related to the solar year in the tonalamatl and the 260-day count. The Codex Vaticanus A further complements sections on Indigenous religion and history, which are presumably based at least partially on preexisting pictographic genres, with mythological and ethnographic texts and illustrations. This creates a framework for the understanding of Mesoamerican religion that seemingly contradicts the Indigenous pictographic semiosis, which relies on performance (i.e., ritual action and context) to function properly.

How did locality and timing inform the Codices Telleriano-Remensis and Vaticanus A's descriptions of Mesoamerican (mostly Nahua) life, religion, and history? Following Cline (1973, 11) and upon consideration of the multiple possible sources of the Codex Telleriano-Remensis, Quiñones Keber (1995, 127–128, 130–131) opted for two major places of production: Mexico City-Tenochtitlan and the area of Puebla and Cholula. On the one hand, the pictorials of the Codex Telleriano-Remensis were possibly drafted in the newly founded capital of New Spain or even Tlatelolco (Quiñones Keber 1995, 128) and created before the addition of the glosses,

which are particularly diverse. The different handwritten annotations in the Codex Telleriano-Remensis belong to the Dominican friar Pedro de los Ríos and other Nahua or *mestizo* authors and may have been added in Cholula or Puebla. The Codex Vaticanus A, on the other hand, was possibly created in Puebla in the early 1560s. The Italian glosses indicate that the manuscript was created with the intention of reaching an overseas audience, most likely the Vatican in Rome (Anders and Jansen 1996b, 30–31). The Italian texts in the Codex Vaticanus A have a finished and polished quality that is missing from the annotations in the Codex Telleriano-Remensis, whose glosses sometimes appear to be hastily written. Therefore, the two documents can be analyzed as part of a process of knowledge production regarding Nahua culture. The Codex Vaticanus A contains a much longer and more elaborate cosmological section, which may have reflected the interests of the friars and a foreign audience in general. It is possible that the Codex Telleriano-Remensis has always only comprised the three sections that, albeit fragmented, still exist today. Mythology became a device with which foreign actors repackaged and repurposed Mesoamerican pictographic manuscripts for an Italian audience.

7.1.1. *Quetzalcoatl as culture hero*

As a mythological culture hero, Quetzalcoatl is remarkably present in the two manuscripts' images and texts. The ways in which this important character is addressed, presented, and discussed shed light on differing conceptions of history, mythology, and religion within the codices. In Section 1.2 of the book, I discussed the importance of Quetzalcoatl as a diviner and visionary priest. I argued that his presence is often implicit in the pre-Hispanic codices because the diviner who read the manuscript and interpreted and activated its images took on the active role of Quetzalcoatl. Furthermore, I argued that the divine priest is represented in a conscious and self-referential manner in the ritual narrative in only a handful of instances. This is the case with the Quetzalcoatl priest in the central section of the Codex Borgia and Moteczuzoma II and with the Cihuacoatl priest in the veintena section of the Codex Borbonicus.

The books discussed in this chapter offer a third perspective on the role of the diviner—more specifically, his mythological character. This is perhaps the best-known aspect of Quetzalcoatl (López Austin 1989, Nicholson 2001), precisely because of its preponderance in written colonial sources. However, as argued in the following discussion, this may be a largely post-conquest distortion that was developed within the friars' intellectual circles and responded to their interests. I do not suggest that the concept of Quetzalcoatl as a cultural hero did not exist in pre-Hispanic Mesoamerica. Rather, I propose that, while Quetzalcoatl's powers once inhabited the present and were summoned during the very act of opening and interpreting pictographic images in the sacred books,

**Table 1. Contents of the Codices Telleriano-Remensis and Vaticanus A**

The Codex Telleriano-Remensis	The Codex Vaticanus A
1. Veintenas	1. Cosmology and mythology
2. Tonalpohualli/Tonalamatl	2. Tonalpohualli/Tonalamatl
3. Annals	3. Fifty-two-year cycle (text only)
	4. Veintenas
	5. Religious customs
	6. Annals

the creation of a mythological discourse about him was geared towards relegating those very visionary qualities to “another” time, the mythic past or the messianic future. In the colonial context, visionary powers were relegated to the demonic and diabolical and therefore could not be salvaged. The personification of the divine ceased to be narrated as an acceptable lived experience and became a tale of the past.

In the first section of the Codex Telleriano-Remensis, which is dedicated to the *veintena* ceremonies, Quetzalcoatl is mentioned only twice in the glosses: in relation to *Pachtontli*—a festival dedicated to Tezcatlipoca, his nemesis—in folio 3v and in relation to the festivities of Quecholli in folio 4v. As Quiñones Keber (1995, 255) noted, both annotations are attributed to Pedro de los Ríos (Hand 3) and refer to Quetzalcoatl, first his defeat at the hands of Tezcatlipoca and in the second instance as the Venus star. Both annotations are part of a larger and well-known narrative about the sinful demise of the great priest, and the tale of the culture hero, who was cast as a sort of Adam, betrays Christian overtones. It should also be noted that, in both cases, Pedro de los Ríos’ remarks do not provide more information about the depicted ceremonies—*Pachtontli* and *Quecholli*—but rather diverge from the topic.

Both the Codices Telleriano-Remensis and Vaticanus A reference Quetzalcoatl as the main priest of Cholula in pictorials and glosses in the *tonalamatl* section. As previously mentioned (Quiñones Keber 1995, 166, 168), while the pictorials display an iconography found in other pre-Hispanic manuscripts and monuments, the glosses extensively relate the myth of Quetzalcoatl in a rather Christianized manner, including references to Jesus and the Creation of Man. The annotation in folio 10r, which was made by Pedro de los Ríos, explains that the main celebration of 7 Reed during the *trecena* 1 Deer was held in Cholula every fifty-two years. The “Binding of the Years,” which occurs at the end of a fifty-two-year cycle, is the moment the *tonalpohualli* (cyclical time) and historical time meet, as the 260-day calendar reverts to its initial position within the solar year. Celebrating it every fifty-two years ensures that the day 7 Reed falls during the same time in the solar year (i.e., in relation to the season and movement of the sun) when the historical event (birth or death) took place.

For the *trecena* 1 Reed in folio 11v, the same annotator again states that “the other great feast” for Quetzalcoatl was held in Cholula, which is undoubtedly a reference to the first day of the *trecena*, also a calendrical name associated with the god and culture hero. At the same time, 7 Reed and 1 Reed are twenty days apart, which signals a period of celebration akin to a *veintena*. Accordingly, one annotator (Hand 1) refers to a fast that precedes the last four days of the *trecena* 1 Flower, before 1 Reed begins. This remark highlights the intrinsic ceremonial nature of the *tonalpohualli*, gods, and days, in contrast to Pedro de

los Ríos, who refers to the myth of Quetzalcoatl and a related celebration in Cholula.

Interestingly, the two authors (Hand 1 and Hand 3) consistently demonstrate considerably divergent points of view on the same dates and periods throughout the *tonalamatl*. Relying on a personal comment by Louise Burkhart, a scholar of Nahuatl language and documents (Quiñones Keber 1995, 326–327n24), Quiñones Keber (1995, 126) tentatively identified Hand 1 as an Indigenous intellectual due to certain recurring orthographic mistakes that indicated that Nahuatl may have been his first language (both written and spoken). It is interesting to see how annotations written by Hand 1 significantly differ from those of Pedro de los Ríos (Hand 3), among others. For Hand 1, important days are not identified in isolation; rather, they require preparation and anticipation, as if they exist on a continuum of perpetually counted time and cannot easily be extrapolated from it. Rather than encapsulating a mythical event, a tendency clearly exhibited by Pedro de los Ríos, this annotator suggests that time and memory are embedded in ritual and divinatory practice. Thus, dates indicate periods in which ritual activity intensifies rather than a fixed commemoration.

In folio 14v of the Codex Telleriano-Remensis (Fig. 7.1), which corresponds to the *trecena* 1 Serpent, Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl is referenced in the pictorials through his calendrical name 1 Reed, attached to the main character Tlahuizcalpantecuhtli, the Venus or morning star. Pedro de los Ríos (Hand 3) adds in writing that “when he went away or disappeared, he took this name” (Quiñones Keber 1995, 262). Once again, this annotation indicates that special attention is paid to mythology and lore. By contrast, Hand 1 follows his own interests by referring to the fasting days associated with the *trecena*, without any mention of Quetzalcoatl. The importance that Pedro de los Ríos attributed to the mythical tale of Topiltzin pervades the two works that he compiled. One wonders if this interest may have affected the production of the pictorials, including folio 14v. For example, cognate images in the same *trecenas* at the bottom of page 69 in the Codex Borgia and page 57 of the Codex Vaticanus B do not associate a name with the Venus star god, although the deity is recognizable by his white body and long yellow hair.

In folio 22r, which is associated with the *trecena* 1 Wind and the hearth goddess Chantico, Hand 1 simply states that Chantico was the patron of the thirteen days and does not comment on the accompanying image. Annotations by this author are often pleonastic and recursive and do not complement or explain the image. Pedro de los Ríos, however, discusses Chantico with the usual Christian and demonic overtones, an element that is more vigorously developed in the corresponding text in the Codex Vaticanus A (f. 31r). In it, the “first” priest Quetzalcoatl (as he is described in the gloss) faces Chantico, the patron of the *trecena*; once again, he is identified by one of his

	i	m	b	i	b
					
					

*malo*

este día del mundo a tiempo  
malo que entró en el mundo  
nueva de que comenzó en malo  
lo piedra de detrucción que vendrá  
aprovechada y eterno mundo

~~patecate~~ **tlauizcalpantecutli**  
vuc cau

ola estrella venus

la primera claridad es  
fue criado en el primer  
años del diluvio  
dizen que esta lumbre  
o estrella fue criada  
antes que sal

este tlauizcalpa tectitli  
estrella venus es el que cal  
vati ~~gubato~~ y ~~dispar~~  
fue y mpo en el mar cuando  
al qual de nula mas yero  
dize que es agla estrella  
llamamos luzero o el alma  
y aby lo pintan con una  
una trasudja  
cuando se fue  
de su aparecio  
tomo su nombre



Aste Tlahuizcalpantecutli quiere decir señor de la mañana quando  
amanece y lomes mo es señor de aquella claridad. quando quiere anoche  
cer so te es señor de los tres dias ayunaban los quatro profetas  
propiamēte la primera claridad  
y aparecio en el mundo. / a qui era  
~~el agnito de los santos que era el cielo~~  
Lo de mas / propia uete de la libra sobre  
las cascas o haz de la tierra

Figure 7.1. Lord 1 Reed as Tlahuizcalpantecuhtli, trecena 1 Serpent. Codex Telleriano-Remensis, f. 14v. Source: gallica.bnf.fr / Bibliothèque nationale de France.

calendrical names, 1 Reed (Fig. 7.2a). He is enclosed within a quadrangular temple structure glossed as “golden house” (*casa de oro*). The *Anales de Cuauhtitlan* (*Códice Chimalpopoca* 1945, par. 35, f. 5) and the Florentine Codex (Sahagún 1950–1982, bk. 3, ch. 3) describe the palaces or temples of Quetzalcoatl in Tula. Gold, green stones, corals, shells, turquoise, and feathers adorned these houses, indicating their sacredness and preciousness. The corresponding trecena on page 18 of the Codex Borbonicus (Fig. 7.2b) also represents a temple enclosure; in it, a standing priest holds an incense bag in one hand and an instrument of sacrifice in the other, in the same guise as Lord 1 Reed in the Codex Telleriano-Remensis. However, in this case, day 1 Crocodile (the first day of the calendar) is depicted near the priest and the sacred house, although it is not directly associated with them. The sign can also be read as the calendrical name of Cipactonal (Day Crocodile), an ancestral diviner credited with the invention of the calendar, as discussed in Chapter 1 (Anders et al. 1991, 172). Finally, the corresponding image at the top of page 63 in the Codex Borgia (Fig. 7.2c) consists of a naked priest falling down a yellow or golden opening while holding sacrificial instruments. In mantic terms, the image could refer to the priest’s visionary travel (as seen in the central pages of the same codex, Fig. 1.8, 4.13, 4.15, 4.16, 4.19) or failure to keep up with penitential duties (Anders et al. 1993, 343). The related evidence from these pictorials suggests that, in the later manuscript (i.e., the Codex Telleriano-Remensis), the written story of Quetzalcoatl was Christianized, perhaps through the influence of Pedro de los Ríos, but upon a preexisting set of ideas related to the office of priesthood. In the colonial manuscript, the date that refers to the invention of the calendar (1 Crocodile) transforms into Quetzalcoatl’s name (1 Reed). The challenges and difficulties inherent in priestly functions are described as a result of sin, a fate assigned to Chantico in the gloss in folio 21v. As discussed in Section 5.2, although 1 Reed is a day that has been associated with Quetzalcoatl since ancient times, it may have taken on new symbolic overtones after the conquest, when it became associated with Cortés’ arrival.

Finally, in the trecena 1 Dog, Quetzalcoatl is mentioned in relation to the accompanying image in both the Codices Telleriano-Remensis (f. 18r) and Vaticanus A (ff. 26–27). The first page of the trecena, which is missing in the Codex Telleriano-Remensis, depicts the patron Xipe Totec (Our Lord the Flayed One). The corresponding Italian gloss in the Codex Vaticanus A (f. 26v) refers to Xipe Totec as a priestly companion to Topiltzin Quetzalcoatl, a myth that is only found in the first section of this manuscript. The text also refers to the fact that 4 Reed, the fourth day of the trecena, was the day on which the rulers were enthroned, following three days of fasting beginning on day 1 Dog. Indeed, 4 Reed is indicated as the day of accession rituals in the Florentine Codex (Sahagún 1950–1982, bk. 4, ch. 25), as discussed in Section 5.1. On the opposite page, an emerald-green feathered serpent in the act of devouring a man faces Xipe Totec (Fig. 7.3), an image repeated in all other trecena depictions (the Codices Borgia, Vaticanus B, Borbonicus). Despite the many sculptural representations of Quetzalcoatl as a mythical feathered serpent, only this trecena portrays it in the act of devouring a human being. In the Codex Telleriano-Remensis, Pedro de los Ríos glosses the image with a terrifying explanation: “To express that it is the feast of fear, they depict this dragon devouring a man” (Quiñones Keber 1995, 265). The friar may be referring to the celebration of Xipe Totec, which is presumably mentioned in the first half of the trecena. However, he may also be referring to coronation rituals and related fasting. As suggested by Quiñones Keber (1995, 181), the act of disappearing into the serpent may be a variation on the theme of emerging from it, which is common in imagery of the plumed serpent. The association of days or years Reed with different numerals (most commonly 1, 4, or 7) is frequently found in pre-Hispanic depictions of Quetzalcoatl in Aztec sculpture in relation to penitential rituals performed by royal dignitaries to invoke and even embody Quetzalcoatl’s identity and powers (e.g., Hackmack Box or the carved relief in the Cerro de la Malinche in Tula, Hidalgo). In another section of the Codex Vaticanus A (f. 7v), a temple called Cauacalco (House of the Serpent) is glossed as “house of fear” (*casa del temor*).



Figure 7.2. Quetzalcoatl god or priest in the temple, trecena 1 Wind. a. Codex Borgia, p. 63. Kingsborough 1831. b. Codex Borbonicus, p. 18. Loubat 1899. c. Codex Telleriano-Remensis, f. 22r. Loubat 1901.

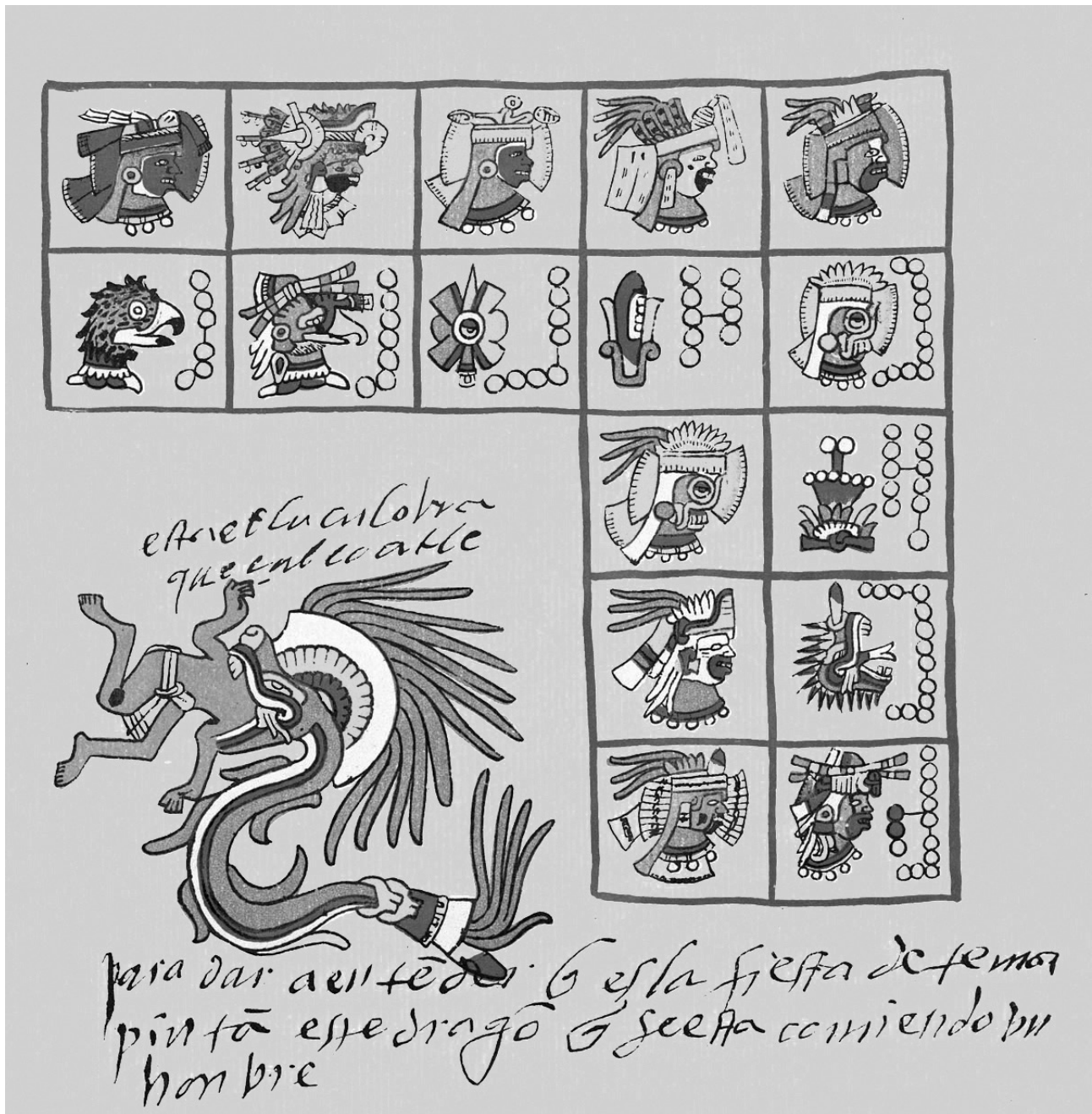


Figure 7.3. Feathered serpent, trecena 1 Dog. Codex Telleriano-Remensis, f. 18r. Loubat 1901.

According to the accompanying text, in one of the temples Quetzalcoatl and his followers performed penance in Tula (also identified sometimes as Chollan). The name “house of fear” derived from the attitude required when entering the temple. People kept their gaze on the ground and never looked up while inside. In the image, the temple’s roof is decorated with green feathers, and a feathered serpent can be seen disappearing into the house, which somewhat mimics the disappearance of the naked man into the maws of the serpent in folio 18r.

### 7.1.2. Cosmology and the tonalpohualli

The first section of Vaticanus A (ff. 1–10) is not found in the Codex Telleriano-Remensis and was perhaps never

part of it. It addresses Indigenous cosmogony, creation, and the life and deeds of the legendary Quetzalcoatl. As Quiñones Keber (1996) previously remarked, there seems to be a strong Nahua (but perhaps not Mexica) influence in this section, which suggests that the pictorials were produced in the region of Cholula and southern Puebla, where Pedro de los Ríos worked in the 1550s and 1560s. The depiction of Nahua cosmology in folios 4v–7r is worth close calendrical and iconographic scrutiny. It relates the four eras (Four Suns), with corresponding deities and events that led to their destruction. Although narratives related to different eras of creation and destruction are common in Mesoamerican mythology, the version found in this manuscript is unique. The first era ended with flooding, and it is aptly associated with

Chalchiuhtlicue, the Nahuatl goddess of water. While Mexica monuments refer to this era as 4 Water (e.g., the famous Calendar Stone), the day sign associated with this era in the Codex Vaticanus A (f. 4v) is 10 Water (Fig. 7.4). This day, which belongs to the fourth trecena of the tonalpohualli (1 Flower), is recorded as the first day of a four-day fasting period in both the Codex Vaticanus A (f. 16v) and the Codex Telleriano-Remensis (f. 10v). The observance is related to the celebration of 1 Reed, the first day of the following trecena, which is presided over by Chalchiuhtlicue, the water goddess responsible for a deluge that destroyed the world (Codex Telleriano-Remensis, f. 11v). According to the *Leyenda de los Soles* (*Códice Chimalpopoca* 1945, f. 1–2), the era of 4 Water was destroyed in the year 1 Reed. In the case of the Codex Telleriano-Remensis, all the glosses mentioned are from Hand 1, possibly a Nahuatl annotator, whose comments favored the description of ceremonial aspects over divinatory or even mythological ones. In this respect, while day 10 Water should be interpreted as a mythological date in the cosmological section of the Codex Vaticanus A, it has a ceremonial value in the tonalamatl in both the Codices Vaticanus A and

Telleriano-Remensis. It is possible that the painter of the Codex Vaticanus A placed importance on the day Water that immediately precedes day 1 Reed, which was associated with destruction by flooding. Thus, calendrical considerations inherent in timekeeping and the tonalpohualli may have played a role in the presentation of cosmological information.

The second era (f. 5v; Fig. 7.5), is presided over by the god of wind, Ehecatl, who is depicted falling downwards in the guise of a green feathered serpent. The head of the serpent is replaced by a solar disk from which the wind god himself emerges. Rather than the most commonly depicted day 4 Wind, the day 1 Dog is signaled, which is the first day of the fourteenth trecena, as previously discussed; its mantic image includes a green feathered serpent devouring a man. The fourth day of the trecena, 4 Reed, was reserved for the enthronement of rulers. The two images—a naked man entering a feathered serpent and a sun god emerging from it—may be viewed as the stages of a succession ceremony in which the prospective ruler must undergo a rite of passage (vision quest) to acquire his title.

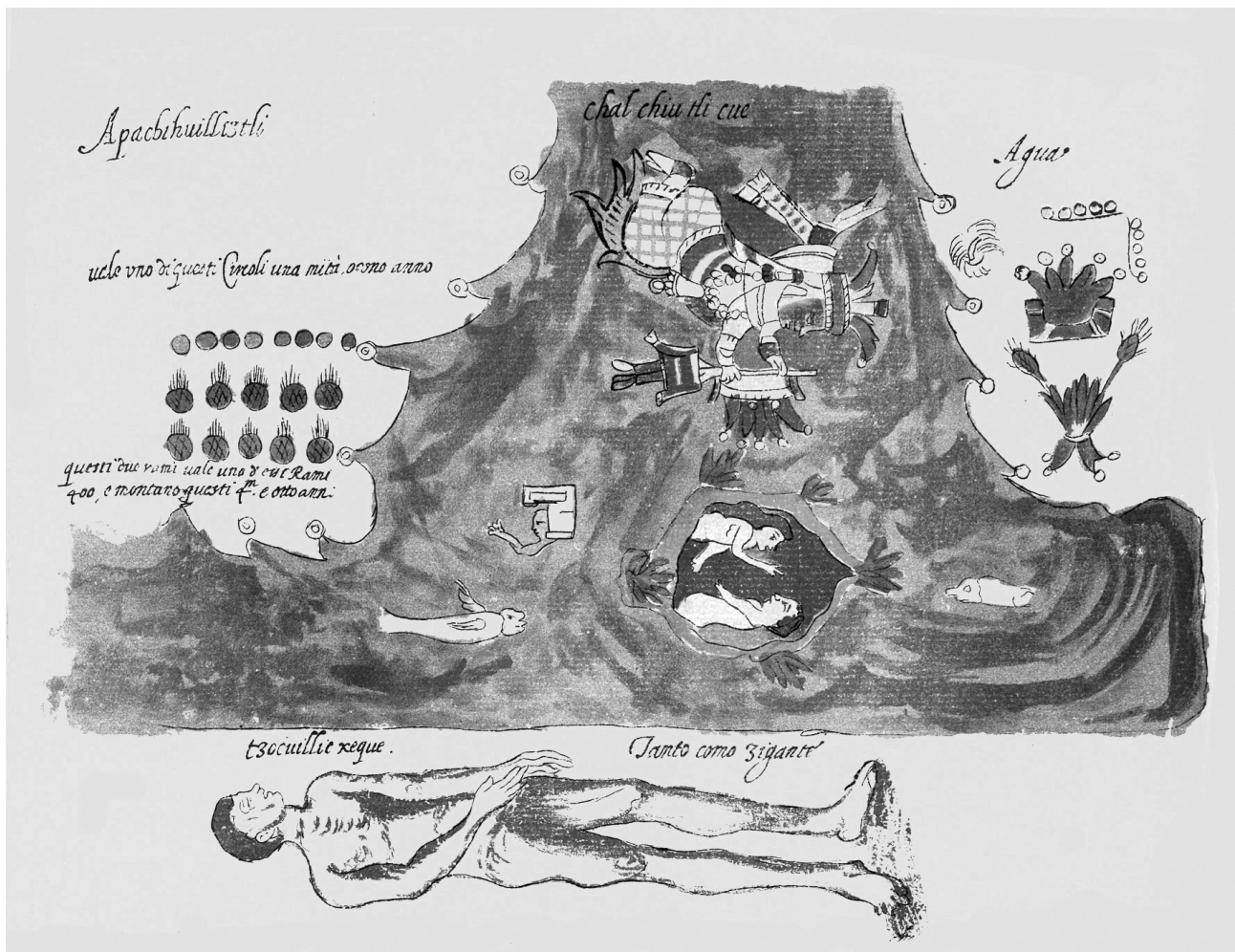


Figure 7.4. End of the first Sun. Codex Vaticanus A, f. 4v. Loubat 1900.

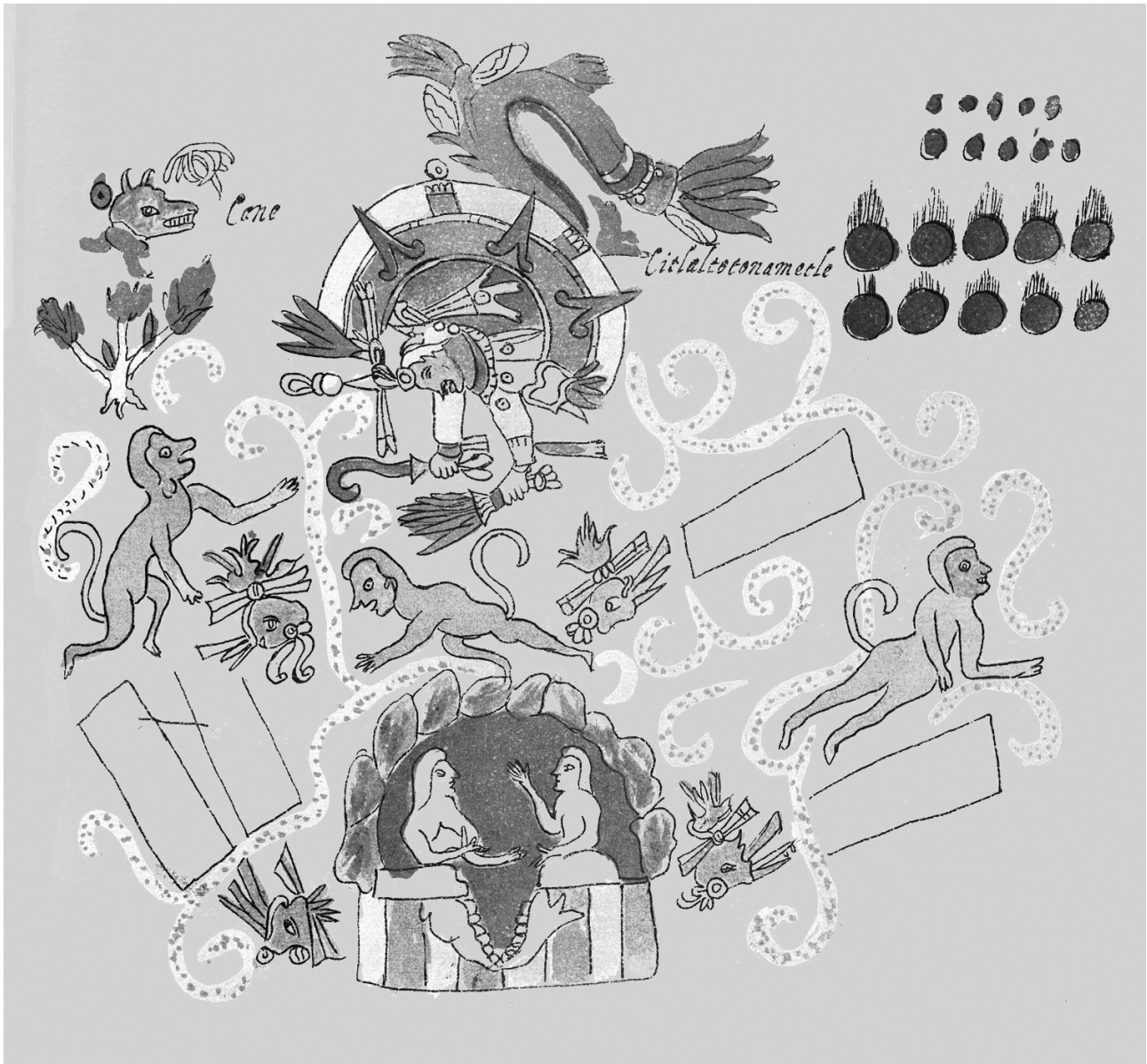


Figure 7.5. End of the second Sun. Codex Vaticanus A, f. 5v. Loubat 1900.

The relationship between the second era and the trecena 1 Dog is explained in the Italian text as follows:

The deluge came on the day that they call 1 Dog, which is in their calendar, because they relied on these events to make those pictures that they use for every day of the month and year, as we shall see ... (*venne questo diluvio in quel giorno ch'essi dicono, uno cane, che se ritrova nel suo calendario, perché de simili accidenti pigliorno occasione di fare quelle figure, che servissero à tutti li giorni del mese et dell'anno, come dopo si vedrà ...*). (Translation by author)

The annotator then makes a clear connection between cosmology and the calendar. Although the latter derived from the former in his mind, cosmological significance in this case (and many others) may have been based on calendrical patterns and established ceremonial behavior.

The third era, presided over by the fire god Xiuhtecuhtli, is associated with the day 9 Movement and was destroyed by fire, according to the text in folio 6r. This day, which belongs to the trecena 1 Water, falls five days before 1 Wind, which is tied to the destruction of the world by fire in the *Leyenda de los Soles* (*Códice Chimalpopoca* 1945, f. 1–2). The annotators of both the Codices Telleriano-Remensis (f. 21v) and Vaticanus A (f. 30v) note this aspect in relation to the patron of the trecena, Chantico, the hearth goddess and female equivalent of Xiuhtecuhtli, who is responsible for the destruction depicted in the Codex Vaticanus A (f. 6r; Anders and Jansen 1996b, 180). It is possible that, even in this instance, the day signaled is a day of preparation and anticipation for the upcoming destruction. Finally, no date is mentioned for the fourth and final era associated with the flower goddess Xochiquetzal in folio 7r. This absence can be attributed to the fact that, according to the Codex Vaticanus A, this was the current era, which began



when Quetzalcoatl was born of Xochiquetzal in Cholula. Unlike central Mexican sources, such as the *Leyenda de los Soles* (*Códice Chimalpopoca* 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 Huautla 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 Nahuatl group that settled in modern-day southern Puebla and founded the towns of Tehuacán, Teotitlán, and Coxcatlán. 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 Nahuatl-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 Atamalqualiztli, as the fasting of bread and water was known among the Nahuas, is said to have occurred in Tenochtitlan during the year 2 Flint (1520), concurrent with the veintena of Hueytecuilhuitl. In Caso's chronology, July 23 was 5 Rain in the year 2 Flint, during the veintena of Hueytecuilhuitl. If Atamalqualiztli was celebrated every eight years, an observation also found in the Sahaguntine 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 Nahuatl) 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 Nahuatl) 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