

METATES

During the reconnaissance notes were made on the metates found on the surface (Strómsvik, 1935). Although the data are fragmentary and do not include every site visited, it must be remembered that only occasionally was any excavation done and that the metates found on the surface have been subjected to a great deal of weathering and are often unrecognizable. However, even if the data from the few metates measured may not be important in itself, it will add to the sum gathered and in time may form a designatory criterion in allocating certain broad developmental tendencies and fundamental relations to culture.

Even though all the examples recorded are of the grooved type (figs. 125, 126), it can not be assumed that the plain surface or three-legged types do not occur. A distinct subtype of the grooved metate appears at Ox-

pemul. Instead of having a continuous trough extending the length of the metate and curving upward on the sides, the subtype has one long slope, extending two-thirds the length of the metate, and a sharp upward slope occupying the other third almost at right angles to the first (fig. 125*b,d,e*).

This subtype was seen in only one other place—Balakbal (Structure II, south wall of Room 3)—and here the single example was used in a wall-fill. A conservative difference in dates between the two sites places Oxpemul 300 years later than Balakbal. All the metates noted at Oxpemul were found in the central court of Structure XII. This concentration may not have special significance, but it may indicate a consolidation of a group of people or the possibility that this specific section of the city was given over to the preparation of foods.