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Bifacial technology at Sibudu and its implications for our understanding of the Still Bay

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The Still Bay phase of the southern African MSA has often been viewed as being limited to a narrow period around 70-75 ka BP. Much current research on the southern African MSA addresses the nature and tempo of cultural change and considers the implications that the Still Bay has for our understanding of the emergence of advanced patterns of cultural behavior. Ongoing excavations by the University of Tübingen at Sibudu in KwaZulu Natal Province of South Africa have exposed a number of new stratigraphic horizons at the base of the sequence from the deep sounding. The results of our most recent fieldwork show that bifacial technology and numerous Still Bay points are found in the lowest stratigraphic units at the site. These layers underlie what has previously been described as Still Bay and “pre-Still Bay” deposits. The newly excavated strata are not yet dated, but they must significantly predate the age of 77 ka BP attributed to deposits near the base of Lyn Wadley’s excavation at Sibudu. In this paper we characterize the nature of the bifacial technology of the site. This work suggests that Still Bay bifacial technology is not limited to a narrow chronological phase of the southern African MSA.