



Orthoceras



Orthoceras descends from an ancient mollusc belonging to the cephalopod family that lived between 200 and 480 million years ago. The name means straight horn, referring to the characteristic long, straight, conical shell. The preserved shell is all that remains of this ancestor of our modern-day squid.

They could swim as well as crawl on the ocean floor. By filling the chambers in their shells with air they could float through the seas propelling themselves by squirting jets of water.

During the peak of their existence, some Orthoceras reached a length of 5 meters and they were the top-predators of their day, not only by size, but also in numbers. A mass extinction about 250 million ago left spectacular accumulations of Orthoceras and Ammonite shells on the edge of the Sahara Desert which have formed into beautiful fossilstone.

Large blocks are mined using primitive tools and made into spectacular homewares including sinks, tables and dishes.

