

= Italian cruiser Aretusa =

Aretusa was a torpedo cruiser of the Partenope class built for the Italian Regia Marina ( Royal Navy ) in the 1880s . Laid down in June 1889 at the Cantiere navale fratelli Orlando shipyard , she was launched in March 1891 and was commissioned in September 1892 . Her main armament were her six torpedo tubes , which were supported by a battery of ten small 47 mm caliber guns . Aretusa spent most of her career in the main Italian fleet , where she was primarily occupied with training exercises . At the start of the Italo -Turkish War in September 1911 , she was assigned to the Red Sea Squadron in Italian Eritrea . She bombarded Ottoman positions in the Arabian Peninsula and took part in a blockade of the coast . Worn out by the end of the war in October 1912 , Aretusa was sold for scrap that December and broken up .

= = Design = =

Aretusa was 73 meters ( 239 ft 10 in ) long overall and had a beam of 8 meters ( 27 ft 0 in ) and an average draft of 3 meters ( 11 ft 5 in ) . She displaced 833 metric tons ( 820 long tons ; 918 short tons ) normally . Her propulsion system consisted of a pair of horizontal triple expansion steam engines , each driving a single screw propeller , with steam supplied by four coal fired locomotive boilers . Specific figures for Aretusa 's engine performance have not survived , but the ships of her class had top speeds of 18 to 20 knots ( 33 to 38 km / h ; 20 to 23 mph ) at 3,884 to 4,422 indicated horsepower ( 2,896 to 3,297 kW ) . The ship had a cruising radius of about 1,800 nautical miles ( 3,000 km ; 2,000 mi ) at a speed of 10 knots ( 19 km / h ; 12 mph ) . She had a crew of between 96 and 121 .

Aretusa was armed with a main battery of one 120 mm ( 4 1/2 in ) / 40 gun and six 57 mm ( 2 1/4 in ) / 43 guns mounted singly. She was also equipped with three 37 mm ( 1 1/2 in ) / 20 guns in single mounts . Her primary offensive weapon was her five 450 mm ( 17 3/4 in ) torpedo tubes . The ship was protected by an armored deck that was up to 1 1/2 in ( 41 mm ) thick ; her conning tower was armored with the same thickness of steel plate .

= = Service history = =

Aretusa was laid down at the Cantiere navale fratelli Orlando ( Orlando Brothers ' Shipyard ) in Livorno on 1 June 1889 , and was launched on 14 March 1891 . After fitting out work was completed , the ship was commissioned into the fleet on 1 September 1892 . During the 1893 fleet maneuvers , Aretusa served with the 3rd Division of the Reserve Squadron , along with the protected cruisers Vesuvio and Ettore Fieramosca and four torpedo boats . During the maneuvers , which lasted from 6 August to 5 September , the ships of the Reserve Squadron defended against a simulated attack by the Active Squadron , which gamed a French attack on the Italian fleet . In 1895 , Aretusa was stationed in the 2nd Maritime Department , split between Taranto and Naples , along with most of the torpedo cruisers in the Italian fleet . These included her sister ships Partenope , Minerva , Euridice , Iride , Urania , and Caprera , the four Goito class cruisers , and Tripoli . As of 1898 , Aretusa was assigned to the Active Squadron , with included the ironclads Sicilia and Sardegna and two other cruisers .

At the start of the Italo -Turkish War in September 1911 , Aretusa was stationed in Italian Eritrea in the Red Sea Squadron . Italian naval forces in the region also included five protected cruisers and several smaller vessels . Shortly after the start of the war on 2 October , Aretusa and the gunboat Volturno encountered the Ottoman torpedo cruiser Peyk-i-Havadis off Al Hudaydah . In a short engagement , the Italians vessels forced the Ottoman ship to flee into Al Hudaydah , bombarded the port facilities , and then withdrew . Peyk-i-Havadis was later interned in British controlled Suez . The threat of an Ottoman attack from the Arabian Peninsula led the Italian High Command to reinforce the Red Sea Squadron ; the additional ships included another cruiser and several destroyers . The protected cruiser Piemonte and two destroyers annihilated a force of

seven Ottoman gunboats in the Battle of Kurfud Bay on 7 January 1912 .

Following the neutralization of Ottoman naval forces in the region , Aretusa and the rest of the Italian ships then commenced a bombardment campaign against the Turkish ports in the Red Sea before declaring a blockade of the city of Al Hudaydah on 26 January . On 27 July and 12 August , Aretusa , her sister ship Caprera , and Piemonte conducted two bombardments of Al Hudaydah . During the second attack , they destroyed an Ottoman ammunition dump . With the threat of an Ottoman attack greatly reduced , the High Command thereafter began to withdraw forces from the Red Sea Squadron . By the end of August , the unit was reduced to three protected cruisers , Aretusa , Caprera and two auxiliaries . On 14 October , the Ottoman government agreed to sign a peace treaty , ending the war . Aretusa 's career ended shortly thereafter ; the Regia Marina discarded the ship in December and she was subsequently broken up for scrap .