

= SMS Kronprinzessin Erzherzogin Stephanie =

SMS Kronprinzessin Erzherzogin Stephanie was an ironclad warship built for the Austro-Hungarian Navy in the 1880s, the last vessel of that type to be built for Austria-Hungary. The ship, named for Archduchess Stephanie, Crown Princess of Austria, was laid down in November 1884, was launched in April 1887 and completed in July 1889. She was armed with a pair of 305 mm (120 in) guns in open barbettes and had a top speed of 17 knots (31 km/h; 20 mph). Her service was limited, in large part due to the rapid pace of naval development in the 1890s, which quickly rendered her obsolescent. As a result, her career was generally limited to routine training and the occasional visit to foreign countries. In 1897, she took part in an international naval demonstration to force a compromise over Greek and Ottoman claims to the island of Crete. Kronprinzessin Erzherzogin Stephanie was decommissioned in 1905, hulked in 1910, and converted into a barracks ship in 1914. After Austria-Hungary's defeat in World War I, the ship was transferred to Italy as a war prize and was eventually broken up for scrap in 1926.

= = Design = =

In the decades that followed the Austrian victory at the Battle of Lissa in 1866, naval expenditure in the Austro-Hungarian Empire were drastically reduced, in large part due to the veto power the Hungarian half of the empire held. Surrounded by potentially hostile countries powers on land, the Austro-Hungarian Empire was more concerned with these threats, and so naval development was not prioritized. Admiral Friedrich von Pöck argued for several years to improve the strength of the Austro-Hungarian fleet, finally winning authorization to build the center battery ship Tegetthoff in 1875. He spent another six years trying in vain to secure a sister ship to Tegetthoff. In 1881, he called for a fleet of eleven armored warships in 1881. Pöck ultimately had to resort to budgetary sleight of hand, appropriating funds that had been allocated to modernize the ironclad Erzherzog Ferdinand Max to build an entirely new vessel. He attempted to conceal the deception by referring to the ship officially as Ferdinand Max, though the actual Ferdinand Max was still anchored in Pola as a school ship.

= = = General characteristics and machinery = = =

Kronprinzessin Erzherzogin Stephanie was 85.36 meters (280 ft 1 in) long between perpendiculars and 87.24 m (286 ft 3 in) long overall. She had a beam of 17.06 m (56 ft 0 in) and a draft of 6.6 m (21 ft 8 in), and she displaced 5,075 metric tons (4,995 long tons). Her hull was constructed with transverse and longitudinal steel frames and was extensively subdivided into watertight compartments to improve the ship's resistance to flooding. The ship was equipped with a ram bow that was manufactured in Germany by Krupp. She was fitted with two pole masts equipped with fighting tops for some of her light guns. Her crew number 430 officers and enlisted men.

The ship was powered by a pair of compound steam engines driving two screw propellers; the engines were built by Maudslay, Sons and Field of Britain. The number and type of the coal-fired boilers that provided steam for the engines have not survived, though they were trunked into two funnels. Her propulsion system was rated to provide 8,000 indicated horsepower (6,000 kW) for a top speed of 17 knots (31 km/h; 20 mph).

= = = Armament and armor = = =

Kronprinzessin Erzherzogin Stephanie was armed with a main battery of two 305 mm (120 in) 35-caliber guns mounted singly in an open barbette. They were placed forward in sponsons over the battery deck to maximize end-on fire. The guns were manufactured by Krupp, while the carriages that carried them were built by Armstrong Mitchell & Co

. The guns fired a 450 @-@ kilogram (990 lb) shell using a 140 kg (310 lb) charge of brown powder , which produced a muzzle velocity of 530 metres per second (1 @,@ 700 ft / s) . While the open barbettes provided a wide field of fire for the slow @-@ firing guns , they were rapidly rendered obsolete by the successful application of quick @-@ firing (QF) technology to large @-@ caliber artillery pieces .

The main battery was supported by a secondary battery of six 15 cm (5 @.@ 9 in) 35 @-@ caliber guns , also built by Krupp . These were mounted in gun ports amidships , three on each side . She carried nine 47 mm (1 @.@ 9 in) QF guns for close @-@ range defense against torpedo boats ; seven were 44 @-@ caliber guns and the other two were shorter 33 @-@ caliber pieces , all built by Hotchkiss . Her gun armament was rounded out by a pair of 37 mm (1 @.@ 5 in) 44 @-@ caliber QF guns and a pair of 7 cm (2 @.@ 8 in) 15 @-@ caliber landing guns for use by landing parties . As was customary for capital ships of the period , she carried four 40 cm (16 in) torpedo tubes ; one was mounted in the bow , another in the stern , and one on each broadside .

Kronprinzessin Erzherzogin Stephanie was protected with compound armor manufactured by the Dillinger Hütte works in Germany . The ship was protected by an armored belt that was 229 mm (9 @.@ 0 in) thick . The barbette for the main battery was 283 mm (11 @.@ 1 in) thick , and the conning tower had sides that were 50 mm (2 @.@ 0 in) thick .

= = Service history = =

Kronprinzessin Erzherzogin Stephanie was built by the Stabilimento Tecnico Triestino shipyard in Trieste . Her keel was laid down on 12 November 1884 , the last ironclad to be laid down for the Austro @-@ Hungarian Navy . She was launched on 14 April 1887 and completed in July 1889 . The following year , the German emperor , Kaiser Wilhelm II , invited the Austro @-@ Hungarian fleet to take part in the annual fleet training exercises in August . Kronprinzessin Erzherzogin Stephanie , the ironclad Kronprinz Erzherzog Rudolf , and the protected cruiser Kaiser Franz Joseph I were sent to Germany under the command of Rear Admiral Johann von Hinke . While en route , the squadron made visits in Gibraltar and Britain ; during the latter stop , the ships took part in the Cowes Regatta , where they were reviewed by Queen Victoria . The ships also stopped in Copenhagen , Denmark and Karlskrona , Sweden . During the voyage back to Austria @-@ Hungary , the squadron visited Cherbourg , France and Palermo , Italy .

Celebrations to honor the 400th anniversary of Christopher Columbus 's first trans @-@ Atlantic voyage were held in several countries ; Kronprinzessin Erzherzogin Stephanie , Kronprinz Erzherzog Rudolf , and Kaiser Franz Joseph I represented Austria @-@ Hungary during the ceremonies in Genoa , Italy , Columbus 's birthplace . During the 1893 fleet maneuvers , Kronprinzessin Erzherzogin Stephanie was mobilized to train alongside the ironclads Kronprinz Erzherzog Rudolf , Prinz Eugen , Kaiser Max , and Don Juan d 'Austria , among other vessels . Kronprinzessin Erzherzogin Stephanie took part in an international naval demonstration off Crete in 1897 during a period of tension between Greece and the Ottoman Empire that culminated in the Greco @-@ Turkish War . The Austro @-@ Hungarian contingent , which also included the armored cruiser Kaiserin und Königin Maria Theresia , and the torpedo cruisers Tiger , Leopard , and Sebenico , three destroyers , and eight torpedo boats , was the third largest squadron to take part in the demonstration , after the British and Italian fleets . Austria @-@ Hungary , displeased with the settlement that left Crete with a Greek ruler but nominally under Turkish control , withdrew its ships in March 1898 , before the other members of the international fleet .

Already by 1898 , the ship was regarded by the Austro @-@ Hungarian Navy as a second @-@ rate vessel , after less than 10 years in service . The rapid pace of naval development in the late 19th century had quickly rendered her obsolescent . She was decommissioned in 1905 , In 1908 , the Austro @-@ Hungarian Navy attempted to sell the ship , Kronprinz Erzherzog Rudolf , and Tegetthoff to Uruguay in an attempt to raise funds for new projects , but the deal fell through . In 1910 , she was hulked and became a barracks ship for the mine warfare school in 1914 , and served in this role for the duration of World War I. Following the conclusion of the conflict , Kronprinzessin Erzherzogin Stephanie was ceded to Italy as a war prize in 1920 and eventually

broken up for scrap in 1926 .