

= Italian ironclad Ancona =

Ancona was an ironclad warship , the last member of the Regina Maria Pia class built in French shipyards for the Italian Regia Marina (Royal Navy) in the 1860s . Ancona was laid down in August 1862 , was launched in October 1864 , and completed in April 1866 . She and her three sister ships were broadside ironclads , mounting a battery of four 8 @-@ inch (200 mm) and twenty @-@ two 164 mm (6 @.@ 5 in) guns on the broadside .

Ancona was quickly readied for combat when Italy declared war against the Austrian Empire in the Third Italian War of Independence in June 1866 . The following month , she joined the Italian fleet at the Battle of Lissa . She was stationed in the van of the Italian fleet , which became separated from the rest of the fleet . Ancona was damaged by Austrian shellfire , including one shell that started a fire . Her career was uneventful after the war , resulting from a combination of the emergence of more modern ironclads and a severe reduction in the Italian naval budget following their defeat at Lissa . She was rebuilt as a central battery ship some time after Lissa , and was eventually sold for scrapping in 1903 .

= = Design = =

Ancona was 81 @.@ 8 meters (268 ft) long overall ; she had a beam of 15 @.@ 16 m (49 @.@ 7 ft) and an average draft of 6 @.@ 35 m (20 @.@ 8 ft) . She displaced 4 @,@ 157 metric tons (4 @,@ 091 long tons ; 4 @,@ 582 short tons) normally and up to 4 @,@ 619 t (4 @,@ 546 long tons ; 5 @,@ 092 short tons) at full load . She had a crew of 480 ? 485 officers and men . Ancona was a broadside ironclad , and she was initially armed with a main battery of four 8 in (203 mm) guns and twenty @-@ two 164 mm (6 @.@ 5 in) guns , though her armament changed throughout her career . The ship was protected by iron belt armor that was 4 @.@ 3 in (109 mm) thick and extended for the entire length of the hull at the waterline . The side armor extended up to the battery deck with the same thickness of iron plate .

Her propulsion system consisted of one single @-@ expansion steam engine that drove a single screw propeller , with steam supplied by eight coal @-@ fired , rectangular boilers . Her engine produced a top speed of 13 @.@ 74 knots (25 @.@ 45 km / h ; 15 @.@ 81 mph) from 2 @,@ 548 indicated horsepower (1 @,@ 900 kW) , making her the fastest member of her class . She could steam for 2 @,@ 600 nautical miles (4 @,@ 800 km ; 3 @,@ 000 mi) at a speed of 10 knots (19 km / h ; 12 mph) . The ship was initially schooner @-@ rigged to supplement the steam engine , though her masts were later reduced to a barque rig . Ultimately , she lost her sailing rig completely , having it replaced with a pair of military masts with fighting tops .

= = Service history = =

Ancona was laid down at the Arman Brothers shipyard in Bordeaux , France on 11 August 1862 , the last member of her class to begin construction . She was launched on 17 October 1864 and completed in April 1866 . Two months later , in June , Italy declared war on Austria , as part of the Third Italian War of Independence , which was fought concurrently with the Austro @-@ Prussian War . The Italian fleet commander , Admiral Carlo Pellion di Persano , initially adopted a cautious course of action ; he was unwilling to risk battle with the Austrian Navy , despite the fact that the Austrian fleet was much weaker than his own . Persano claimed he was simply waiting on the ironclad ram Affondatore , en route from Britain , but his inaction weakened morale in the fleet , with many of his subordinates openly accusing him of cowardice .

Rear Admiral Wilhelm von Tegetthoff brought the Austrian fleet to Ancona on June 27 , in attempt to draw out the Italians . At the time , many of the Italian ships were in disarray ; several ships did not have their entire armament , and several others had problems with their engines . Ancona , having entered service only two months before , was not yet ready for combat . Persano held a council of war aboard the ironclad Principe di Carignano to determine whether he should sortie to engage Tegetthoff , but by that time , the Austrians had withdrawn , making the decision moot . The

Minister of the Navy , Agostino Depretis , urged Persano to act and suggested the island of Lissa , to restore Italian confidence after their defeat at the Battle of Custoza the previous month . On 7 July , Persano left Ancona and conducted a sweep into the Adriatic , but encountered no Austrian ships and returned on the 13th .

= = = Battle of Lissa = = =

On 16 July , Persano took the Italian fleet out of Ancona , bound for Lissa , where they arrived on the 18th . With them , they brought troop transports carrying 3 @, @ 000 soldiers ; the Italian warships began bombarding the Austrian forts on the island , with the intention of landing the soldiers once the fortresses had been silenced . In response , the Austrian Navy sent the fleet under Tegetthoff to attack the Italian ships . Ancona was at that time assigned to the 1st Division , commanded by Admiral Giovanni Vacca , along with the ironclads Castelfidardo and Principe di Carignano , the divisional flagship . After arriving off Lissa on the 18th , Persano ordered the 1st Division to bombard the Austrian fortresses protecting the island , but Vacca informed him that his ships ' guns could not elevate high enough to hit the high fortifications . Persano then sent Vacca 's division to Vis to force the harbor defenses , but by the time they arrived , night was approaching , and so he cancelled the attack .

The next morning , Persano ordered the ironclad Formidabile to enter the harbor Vis and attack the Madonna battery , supported by Ancona and the rest of the 1st Division . Vacca found it impossible to employ his ships in the confined waters , and so he left Formidabile to handle the battery . With the day 's attacks again having yielded no results , Persano decided to make another attempt on the 20th . Vacca would take his three ships to patrol to the north @-@ east of the island while the rest of the fleet would again try to land the soldiers . Before the Italians could begin the attack , the dispatch boat Esploratore arrived , bringing news of Tegetthoff 's approach . Persano 's fleet was in disarray ; Vacca 's ships were three miles to the northeast from Persano 's main force , and three other ironclads were further away to the west . Persano immediately ordered his ships to form up with Vacca 's , first in line abreast formation , and then in line ahead formation . Ancona was the third ship in the Italian line .

Shortly before the action began , Persano left his flagship , Re d 'Italia , and transferred to the turret ship Affondatore , though none of his subordinates on the other ships were aware of the change . They there thus left to fight as individuals without direction . More dangerously , by stopping Re d 'Italia , he allowed a significant gap to open up between Vacca 's three ships and the rest of the fleet . Tegetthoff took his fleet through the gap between Vacca 's and Persano 's ships , in an attempt to split the Italian line and initiate a melee . He failed to ram any Italian vessels on the first pass , so he turned back toward Persano 's ships , and took Re d 'Italia , San Martino , and Palestro under heavy fire . Vacca turned his division to port , taking them away from the Austrian ships hammering Persano 's division . He briefly attempted to engage the Austrian wooden ships under Anton von Petz in the rear , but was driven off by heavy fire from three steam frigates .

By this time , Re d 'Italia had been badly damaged , and she attempted to close up with Ancona . While she reversed course to meet Ancona , the ship was rammed and sunk by the Austrian flagship , SMS Erzherzog Ferdinand Max . Ancona was set on fire by Austrian shells , but her crew quickly put them out . Ancona then rallied with the coastal defense ship Varese to make another attack on von Petz 's unarmored ships , but the two Italian vessels collided and became entangled . While their crews worked to free the ships , the Austrians were able to escape . Persano broke off the engagement to consolidate his forces , but his ships , low on coal and ammunition , and with badly demoralized crews , could not be rallied by Persano 's half @-@ hearted attempt to launch an attack . The Italian fleet began to withdraw , followed by the Austrians ; as night began to fall , the opposing fleets disengaged completely , heading for Ancona and Pola , respectively . In the course of the battle , Ancona had been hit many times , with several of her iron plates having been dislodged . An Austrian shell managed to enter one of her gun ports and explode inside .

After the battle , Vacca replaced Persano ; he was ordered to attack the main Austrian naval base at Pola , but the war ended before the operation could be carried out .

== Later career ==

For the rest of her long career , Ancona served in a variety of roles , both in the main fleet and in Italy 's colonial empire . After the end of the war , the government lost confidence in the fleet and drastically reduced the naval budget . The cuts were so severe that the fleet had great difficulty in mobilizing its ironclad squadron to attack the port of Civitavecchia in September 1870 , as part of the wars of Italian unification . Instead , the ships were laid up and the sailors conscripted to man them were sent home . Some time after 1866 , the ship was rebuilt as a central battery ship , with most of her guns located in a central , armored casemate . Two other guns were placed in the bow as chase guns , with a third mounted as a stern chaser . At around 1871 , her armament was also revised , to two 10 in (250 mm) guns in the bow and eight 8 in guns , four on each broadside and the last in the stern . Later , her armament was changed again , to eight 6 in (150 mm) guns , six 4 @.@ 7 in (120 mm) guns , four 57 mm (2 @.@ 2 in) quick firing (QF) guns , and two 37 mm (1 @.@ 5 in) Hotchkiss revolver cannons . Ancona was stricken from the naval register in 1903 and then broken up for scrap .