



Trojanski (Beklemeto) prohod (1525m) Троянски (Беклемето) проход

Top : 24.60618° 42.78003°



The Arch of Freedom above the pass

Topography of Bulgaria



Topographically speaking, Bulgaria is a contrasted land : the Danubian plain in the north, the Black Sea in the east, large and high ranges in the center and in the south-west.

In its center, the territory is crossed by the Stara Planina (« Old mountain »). Its highest point is the Botev Peak (2376m). The prohodi look like pearls on a string : the pass of today (BIG936), Šipčenski prohod (BIG937) or Tvardiski prohod (1044m), used very often in the national Tour. The 2 news in the EuroBIG stretch the Bulgarian list toward the east : Balgarka (BIG987 in the north of Sliven) and Dyulinski prohod (BIG988 not too far from the Black Sea).

More informations about the Bulgarian BIGs :

<https://www.bigcycling.eu/en/big/index/zone/zone/10/>

<https://www.bigcycling.eu/en/big/index/zone/zone/29/>

In the south-west, we find the Rila, Pirin and Rhodope Mountains. Highest point : Goljam Perelik (2191m).

The first is represented by Maljovica (BIG938) and Rilski manastir (BIG939), the second by Rozhenski manastir (BIG940) and Popski preslap (BIG941), and the third by Snezhanka (BIG942).

Tour of Bulgaria

Official website : <http://www.tourofbulgaria.com/>

66th edition in 2017. Quite erratic in the beginning (1924, 1935, 1949 and 1950), but very regular since 1955. Like most of the races in the former Eastern Bloc, the winner list is mostly « communist ». The dissolution of the Soviet Union and of the aligned states and the integration of the Tour in the UCI Europe Tour (2.2) have made possible an increase in the number of nationalities represented. Gabrovksi, the national star, holds the record of victories (4x). Let's also remember Di Grégorio's 1st place in 2013, or Mancebo's 3rd in 2010.

The edition 2016 had 6 stages and 14 KOM. Stages with amazingly different lengths and 2 KOM to highlight : Tvardiski prohod (both sides) and Trojanski prohod, the last of the race and so strategic.

1st stage : Sofia-Plovdiv (205km)

Sarantsi (784m, km41,6, KOM3)

Dolno Kamartsi (932m, km52,4, KOM2)

Vartora (Klisura) (1094m, km99,6 KOM2)

2nd stage : Plovdiv-Kardzhali (95km)

Kamilata (753m, km51,9, KOM3)

Yonchovo (791m, km58,6, KOM3)

3rd stage : Kardzhali-Ivaylovgrad (157km)

Malko Gradishe (520m, km115,2, KOM2)

Kamilski Dol (466m, km132,5, KOM3)

Lambuh-Huhla (264m, km148,1, KOM3)

4th stage : Ivaloyvgrad-Elena (231km)

Kamilski Dol (466m, km21,6, KOM3)

Malko Gradishe (520m, km37,4km, KOM3)

Tvardiski prohod-S (1044m, km206,2, KOM1)

5th stage : Elena-Maglitzh (79km)

Tvardiski prohod-N (1044m, km22,6, KOM1)

6th stage : Maglitzh-Trojan (132km)

Kalofer (638m, km50,9, KOM3)

Trojanski prohod (1525m, km106, KOM1)



Tvardiski prohod

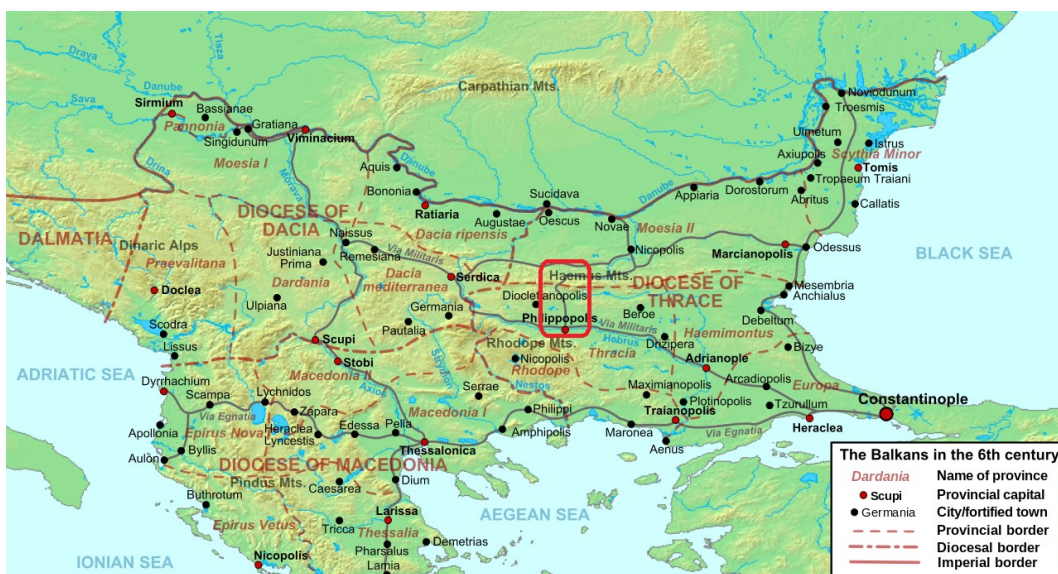
Trojanski prohod – Portrait



On the right, the solid line = the modern road
 In the center, the red dotted line = the Roman way

« Also in the Balkans, on the territory of the current Bulgaria, there was another way, known as Via Traiana (in Bulgarian Траянов път / Trajanov păt). It linked Oescus and Novae on the Danube River to the Via Egnatia along the Aegean Sea, going through Trojan and Melta (today Loveč) in the Balkan Mountains (Stara Planina), Philippopolis (Plovdiv) on the Via Militaris, and the Rhodope Mts. It was the fastest link between the Danubian limes (« border defence system ») and the ports on the Aegean Sea, in the Roman province Thracia. Therefore, it went through the Hemos Mts. (today Balkan Mts.) and the Trojan's pass. The current city of Trojan developed near this way. »

Translation of the text in French [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Via_Militaris_\(Balkans\)](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Via_Militaris_(Balkans))



The modern road is a model of regularity, the best pass for endurance training. Just a few harder short parts at 7%, some waves in a long quiet river. In the National Park « Central Balkan » the environment is as quiet as the slope.

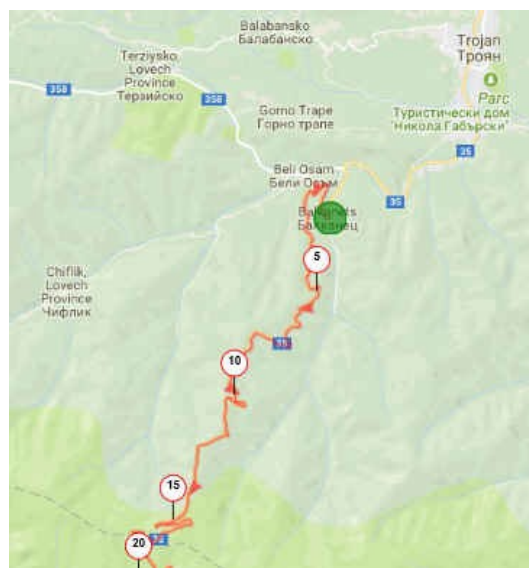


4% in the first 2 km in the northern side

The northern side, from Trojan, has a 987m elevation gain for 18,4km (average 5,36%). Only the km6 and 8 exceed 7%.

Km %

4,1 4,5 5,7 5,7 5,1
 7,1 4,0 7,7 4,1 4,8
 6,3 6,2 6,5 6,9 6,4
 3,4 4,0 5,2 + 10m



Northern side



Foot of the northern side

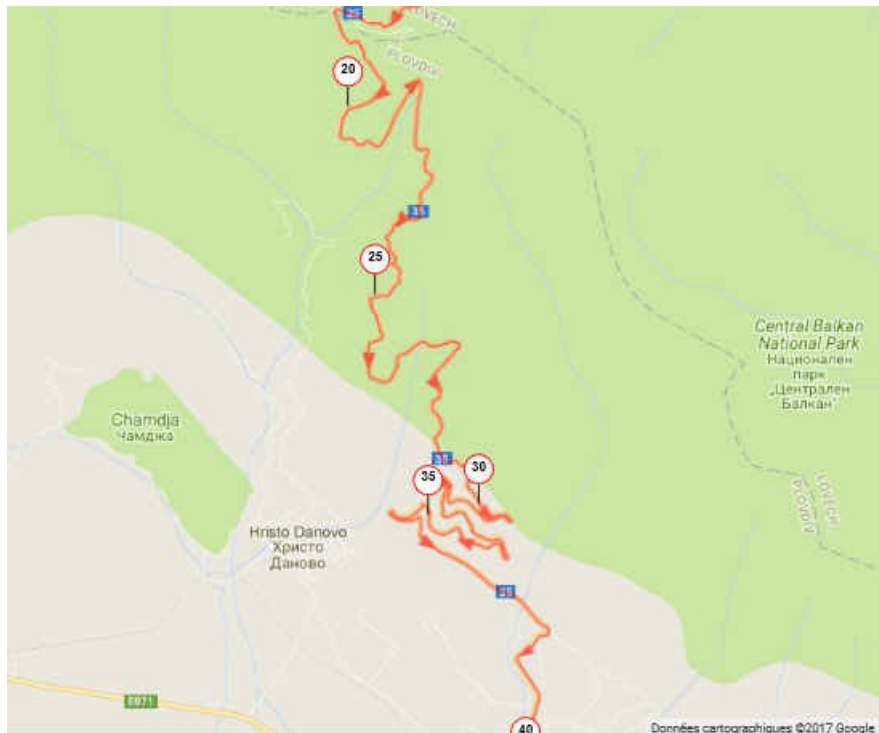


View to Stara Planina



km13 : 6% before the ski resort

The southern side is even easier : the same elevation gain, but a longer distance : 989m in 21,9km (average 4,51%). Plus point : the winding road.



Km % from Karnare

4,9 6,3 6,9 4,7 5,6
 4,4 5,7 4,7 3,4 6,3
 4,9 3,2 6,1 2,1 5,1
 3,1 4,9 1,9 4,2 3,5
 4,2 + 28m



Hairpins (km5 to 10)
 In the background, the southern foot in Karnare



Km15 : 5% and panorama to the Balkan



Hairpin km18



The pass

The Arch of Freedom (Arka na svobodata)

A very impressive monument overlooks the pass. It commemorates both Bulgarian liberations in 1878 and 1944. In 1878, Bulgaria was freed from the Ottoman Empire after the Russo-Turkish War. Two years before, Turkish bachi-bazouk had killed 1500 Bulgarians during an uprising.



This little memory detour isn't more difficult than the road to the pass.
62m in 1,5km : 7 7 4 -2 2 / 2 3 4 3 4 / 4 6 7 6 5 (according to Openrunner)



Southern side onboard camera : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4suyyBpfv54>
Pass at 18.50 + road to the Arch

Wonderful panoramic shot of the Arch : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Prvu71hD4Ak>
In and on the Arch : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ASUISgyVlqE>