



1. St Mary Church, Kosina

The church is situated on a low hill, right at the entrance of the village of Kosina, 8 km northwest of Përmet. Once part of a monastery complex, it represents a Byzantine cross-domed in-shape church of the 12th – 13th cent. Distinct fresco paintings are preserved on the interior walls while the facade contain well-cut stones and brick decoration.



5. Vlach dwelling site

At the Albturist Eco Camping site, 3 km southeast of Përmet, you are offered the chance to visit an authentic Vlach dwelling – the kalive. The location correlates with one of the Vlach's temporary camps set along their seasonal transhumance route. It is a circular structure made of wood and covered with a thatched roof.

6. The Village of Bënja

The village is located on a hill slope over the Lengarica River, c. 14 km southeast of Përmet. This historical village is distinguished for its closely set two and three-storey houses and cobble-stone alleys. As entering the village emerges the Church of Saint Mary, probably a 19th century building with distinct decorative features on the façade.



8. The Lengarica River Canyon

This canyon runs along the Lengarica River and has a system of karstic caves on both of its faces. Archaeological excavation carried out in two of the caves have uncovered the earliest occupation evidence in the valley, dating from the Neolithic period (7000-3000 BC) with continued use up to the Iron Age (2100-1100 BC). A number of thermal water springs flow along the canyon, some rising to the surface to form small pools.



2. St Elias Church, Buhal

The church is located 4 km northwest of Përmet, below the village of Buhal. Built in the 11th-12th centuries as a one-nave church with brick-decorated façade, the church was reconstructed in 1814, with a dome, a narthex and a courtyard, including a level of wall fresco that covered earlier paintings.



3. The village of Buhal

Ca. 20 minutes walking west of St. Elias church you will arrive in the upper quarter of the village of Buhal. Here, two and three-storey stone-built houses of a particular local type of architecture can be seen. The best-preserved mansion is a museum house which serves today as a guesthouse (*The Traditional Guest House Përmet*).



7. The Bridge of Katiu

The bridge crosses the Lengarica River, at the entrance of the Canyon, and once formed part of the Medieval caravan route linking the Vjosa valley with the regions of Shqëri, Dangëlli and Kolonja further to the East. It is a single-arched stone bridge with a cobbled surface built in the 18th century.



9. Sopot Waterfall

Around 22 km southeast of Përmet, above the village of Strëmbec, unravels the spectacular view of the Waterfall of Sopot. The snow-fed waterfall, is 40 m high and flows from a rocky cliff below the highest peak of Mount Nemërçka.

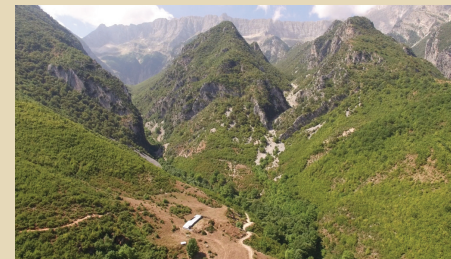
4. St Mary Church, Leusa

The church occupies a compelling position at the entrance of the village of Leusa, 2.8 km southwest of Përmet. It is a high-domed basilical church, with a narthex and a courtyard, constructed in the early 19th century. The interior of the church contains wood-carved furnishings, including an iconostasis and the ceilings, as well as impressive wall paintings.



10. Draçova

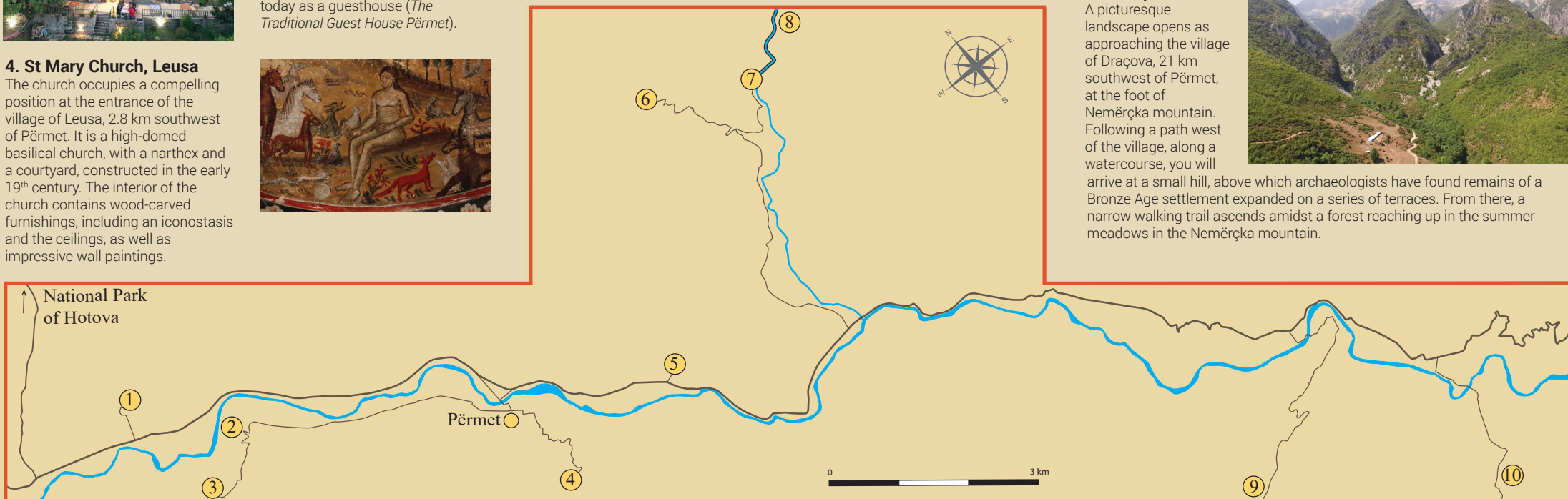
A picturesque landscape opens as approaching the village of Draçova, 21 km southwest of Përmet, at the foot of Nemërçka mountain. Following a path west of the village, along a watercourse, you will arrive at a small hill, above which archaeologists have found remains of a Bronze Age settlement expanded on a series of terraces. From there, a narrow walking trail ascends amidst a forest reaching up in the summer meadows in the Nemërçka mountain.



View of Përmet by Edward Lear, 1857.

PËRMET: A GUARDIAN OF THE VJOSA VALLEY

A guide to the city and its surroundings



Visiting the margins
INovative CULTural ToUrisM in European peripheries



Historic Përmet

The town of Përmet occupies a crucial position along the Upper Vjosa valley, controlling this important route linking the Adriatic with mainland Epirus and Macedonia.

The earliest traces of occupation date to the Early Bronze Age (2500-1900 BC) and are found around the rocky outcrop of 'Guri i Qytetit' to the North of the town, where the later settlement evolved. Remains of a wall uncovered at the foot of the rock date to the 3rd century BC. During the 4th – 6th centuries AD a circuit wall was constructed on the upper plateau of the rock, with additions of a rectangular tower and two cisterns in the 10th/11th – 13th centuries, probably commanding the traffic over the valley's route.



The town is mentioned for the first time in the Ottoman cadaster of 1431 as *Premeti*, center of a province (*vilayet*) and a town (*kaza*) with a castle, 42 houses, a local market and vineyards.

In 1670, the Ottoman historian, Evliya Çelebi recorded 150 houses and a mosque extended below a castle, probably built on the Bolënga hill. In the 19th century, over the

remains of this castle, Ali Pasha of Tepelena, built a rectangular fortress reinforced with massive towers in each of the four corners.

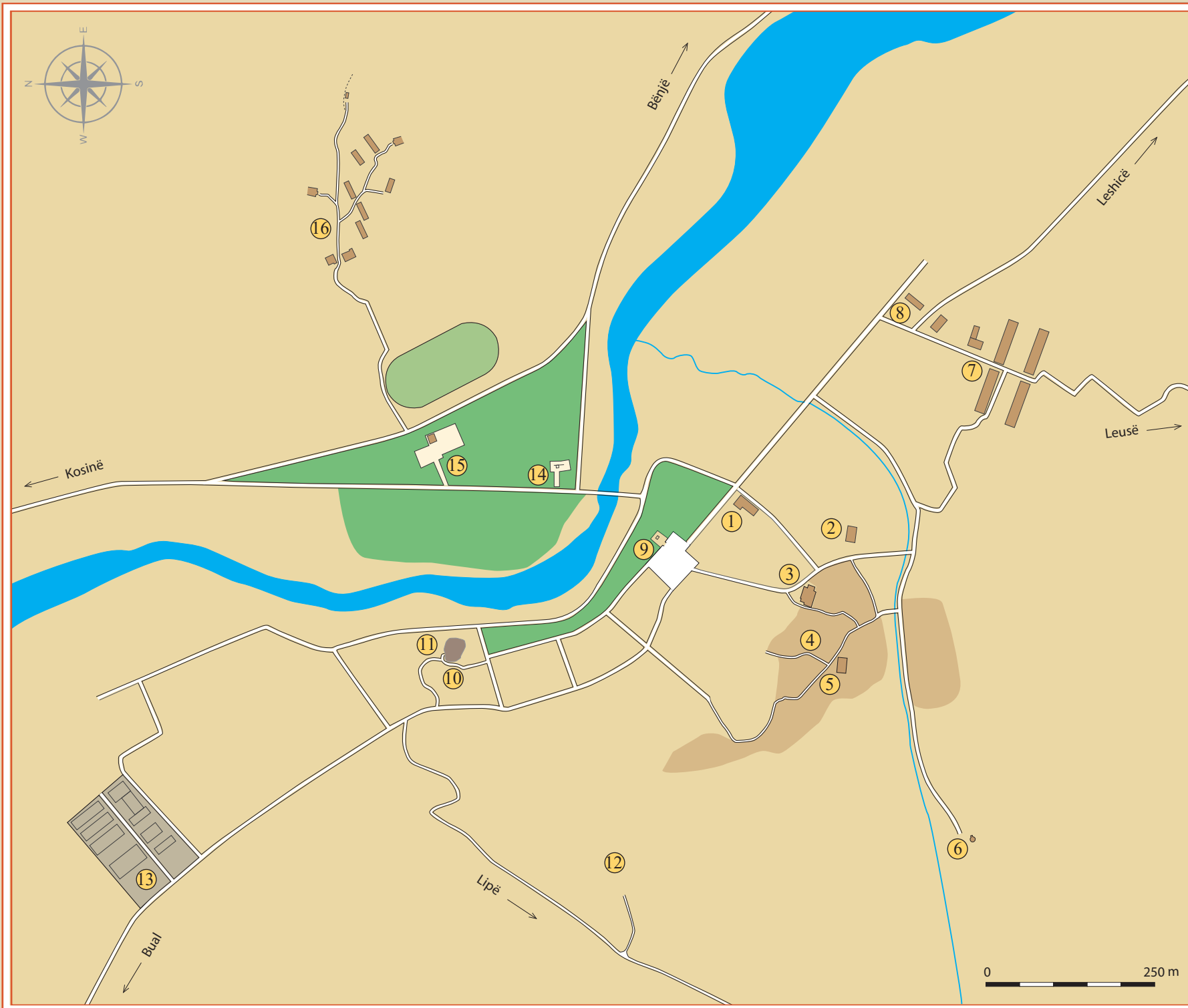
A new quarter of Varosh formed at the foot of the Bolënga hill populated with stone-build houses, some featuring the two and three-storey buildings you can see today.



Two churches are located in Varosh, that of St Nicholas and St Paraskevi, constructed in 1747 and 1776 respectively. A Bektashi tekke was built opposite to Varosh, of which only a monumental tomb (*Türbe*) survives.

During the Second World War, the Upper Vjosa valley was one of the main battlefronts of the Greco-Italian conflict. The town became a military base of the Italian army and a garrison was established here, of which the barracks still survive. The town was attacked, bombed and burned by Italian and German forces. This destroyed the old bazar and many houses in the old quarter.

On 24 May 1944, the first Antifascist Congress of National Liberation Front of Albania was held in one of the Italian barracks, electing a provisional government led by the future communist dictator, Enver Hoxha.



The postwar years saw an extensive construction of landmarks commemorating the war, including memorials, a martyr cemetery, and a museum exhibition in the previous congress hall.



Given its strategic position at the border with Greece, during the Cold War, Përmet came to be a heavy militarized zone. A range of military structures were built, such as the communication and armament garrison opposite to the town, the military headquarters set in the former Italian base, and an anti-aircraft battery on the Bolënga hill, which necessitated demolishing the Medieval castle, along with a number of bunkers and shelters like those preserved at the foot of the rocky outcrop.

1. Historical Museum/Tourist Information Center
2. Saint Paraskevi Church
3. Old Cinema
4. Varosh Quarter
5. Saint Nicholas Church
6. Monumental tomb (*Türbe*)
7. Remains of the Italian Garrison
8. Museum of the Antifascist Congress
9. Memorial of the Antifascist Congress
10. 'Guri i Qytetit'
11. Cold War Tunnel and Bunker
12. Bolënga Hill
13. Artisan workshops of "Gliko"
14. Memorial of the Sixth Partisan Brigade
15. Martyr Cemetery of WWII
16. Abandoned Communication and Armament garrison