Golescu Villa (1910), designed by the architect Constantin N. Simionescu and commisioned by Vasile Golescu, is an example of a neo-Romanian style building (through frames, the outer belt, arches, pavement, etc. of white Albești stone), typical for this region, an efficient combination of architectural elements and the traditional housing and the local version of the European Art Nouveau.

The ensemble also includes a canton-annex, a typical model for the gardener's shelter, reminiscent of cule (fortified rural residences in the southern Carpathians), with the same expression in the national style.

Golescu Villa and forest canton, photo from Pro Patrimonio archive.

"The Golescu Ensemble is meant to serve as villa, summer and winter dwelling or a small nursing home", Golescu archive, Act of expertise, 1927

The Golescu ensemble survived the World Wars and the Communist era, when the property was declared a reserve of exotic seeds by the Muscel Forestry District.

The Golescu Park and Villa came into the ownership of Pro Patrimonio foundation in 2002 following the donation made by one of Vasile Golescu's daughters, Irina Golescu (†2002). She may have been the last hereditary descendant (together with her twin sister Viorica Golescu, †2001) in this line of one of the oldest Romanian families whose history begins in the fifteenth century and has a decisive role in the politics of modernization of the Romanian state and nation.

Following their gesture, the foundation received the mission to preserve, study and promote heritage values, taking over not only the architectural and landscape ensemble, but also all the original furniture, various objects for daily use, paintings, decorative art, carpets, lighting, family library, letters and archive.

Pro Patrimonio Foundation is an international non-profit non-governmental organization with branches in Romania (Bucharest), Great Britain and France.
The foundation dates from the year 2000 and has a series of on-going projects whose main mission is the conservation, rescue and reactivation of cultural heritage, especially in architecture. The actions focus on palpable projects meant to protect and rehabilitate heritage and on involving and raising awareness in communities regarding their own identity, memory and inherited cultural values.
Pro Patrimonio Foundation supports the idea that each citizen is responsible for heritage.

The tangible heritage in Romania is in a distressing state and its protection and preservation are imperative.
At present, with the overwhelming help of more than 100 volunteers, especially young people, Pro Patrimonio runs a series of projects around several historic architectural monuments designed to save heritage, educate and raise awareness among citizens with respect to the importance of cultural heritage.

Partners: World Monuments Fund, Rațiu Family Charitable Foundation, National Trust UK, INTO, Ordinul Arhitecților din România, Europa Nostra, The Prince of Wales's Charitable Fund, Leroy Merlin România, Holcim România, UiPath Foundation.

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GOLESCU ENSEMBLE

Cultural Landscape Observatory in Câmpulung Muscel

— Code AG-II-m-B-13530, Historical Monuments List 2015 —

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The villa and the Golescu Dendrological Park in Câmpulung Muscel, today owned by Pro Patrimonio Foundation, constitute a very valuable assembly of architecture and landscaping.

The name Golescu belongs to one of the oldest families in the south of the Carpathians, who, through important scholars, politicians and intellectuals, contributed culturally, economically and politically to the modernization process of the Romanian people.

Vasile Golescu, 1913, Golești Museum collection in Ștefănești, Argeș county.

Vasile Golescu (1875–1920), a forest engineer born in Bucharest, built Golescu Villa with ground floor and first floor in 1910, with the role of a holiday house, on the western hill, overlooking the city of Câmpulung Muscel, then naming it ***Ștefan Villa*** in memory of his son, a hero fallen for duty during the First World War.

A passionate forestryman, Golescu designed the garden park around the house starting from a natural forest and acclimating exotic forest and ornamental species brought at the beginning of the last century from abroad.

The park covers an area of over 3 ha, an example of exceptional arboreal heritage and biodiversity preserved intact, includes trees over 100 years old, quite uncommon in the area of the Muscel and even in the country. The terraces and stairs are built of local Albești stone masonry without mortar.

"The land covers about 30,000 square meters forming a park, in four series of terraces, bordered by carved stone slopes with five large white stone stairs and cobbled alleys. Everything has lawns of flowers and plants, rare essence trees, good orientation and a wonderful view of the surrounding landscape." Golescu archive, Act of Expertise, 1927

Vasile Golescu's Contribution to Romanian Silviculture

The son of Alexandru G. Golescu (nicknamed „Negru" or „Arăpilă" ["Black"], 1819–1881, remarkable politician and participant in the 1848 revolution and minister in the government of Carol I), Vasile Golescu (1875–1920) was born and died in Bucharest.

Forest engineer, with studies in France, graduated in 1897 from the School of Water and Forests (École des Eaux et Forêts) in Nancy, he helps to develop local forestry education based on the practice.

Vasile Golescu (second row, third from left to right, with boater) along with the 1897 class of the School of Water and Forests in Nancy, France.

In 1903 he marries Maria Eugenia Cantili (daughter of General Grigore Cantili from Bacău), who will support him during the process of creating the Golescu Ensemble in Câmpulung. They have six children together.

Maria Cantili, photo from the Golescu archive.

Golescu (Ștefan) Villa, period post card.

He is the supporter of measures for nature protection and forest management as well as of systematic initiatives of import and acclimatization of plants from North America, Asia, the Mediterranean basin, etc.

„At Câmpulung Muscel, V.A. Golescu brought (in 1914) Douglas saplings from France, which he planted in his park."

Valeriu Norocel Nicolescu et al, ***Revista Pădurilor***, 5-6/2014, p.4

He led the Forestry Diatrict in Câmpulung Muscel, was the secretary of the "Forest Progress" Society (founded in 1886) and collaborator of the *Forest Magazine* (*Revista Pădurilor*) and other French publications of the same kind.

Vasile Golescu, notes regarding the Forestry Regime in Romania, around 1905.

Vasile Golescu contributes with important studies and researches, recognized even today, to the knowledge of the forest fund in the Muscel Mountains, the most relevant being the 1906 study on the spread and ecology of the pine (*Pinus sylvestris* L.).

Pinus sylvestris forest, Wikimedia Commons photo.

Vasile Golescu left behind an impressive library with specialized titles and a personal archive that includes a 1909 manuscript list of trees, shrubs and flowers planted in the dendrological park in Câmpulung Muscel, a true botanical and natural reserve.

After the death of Vasile Golescu, in 1920, Maria Cantili Golescu establishes, through the „Forest Progress" Society, the „Vasile A. Golescu" Fund - the annual award for students from the Silvic School in Brănești (near Bucharest) or of specialized engineers for "meritorious works of botany or forestry".

Revista Pădurilor, 1921, p. 128

By creating the Golescu Ensemble in Câmpulung and through his contributions in the study of the forestry and the forestry fund, the establishment of modern forestry education (and, probably, the Forest Code from 1910), at the beginning of the past century Vasile Golescu left us as legacy a precious cultural landscape of public interest.

His reason for protecting and conserving nature's resources is equally relevant today for health, environment and forests protection and maintaining the ecological balance in the context of massive local deforestation and global climate change considered harmful and irreversible.

Art. 1. "A historical garden is an architectural and vegetal composition that, in terms of history or art, is of public interest." As such, it is considered a monument.

Art. 2 "The garden is an architectural composition whose material is mainly vegetal, therefore alive, and as such perishable and renewable."

The Chart of Historic Gardens, Florence, 1981-1982

"Art. 1. a) the landscape designates a part of territory perceived as such by the population, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of the natural and / or human factors; (...)

d) the protection of the landscape includes the conservation and maintenance of the significant or characteristic landscape aspects, justified by its patrimonial value derived from the natural configuration and / or from the human intervention ".

"(...) the landscape contributes to the formation of local cultures and (...) is a basic component of the European natural and cultural heritage, contributing to human well-being and to the consolidation of the European identity,"

(...) landscape is an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere: in urban or rural areas, in degraded areas or in those that present themselves in perfect condition, in spaces recognized as being of special beauty, as well as in mundane ones".

Extract from the Preamble
The European Landscape Convention, Florence, 2000

View of Villa Golescu from the park, photo Raluca Munteanu, 2020.