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Vandals Apparently Topple Pompeii Column

The Associated Press
Wednesday, March 21, 2007; 6:33 PM

ROME -- A huge column in the garden of an ancient Roman villa at Pompeii was toppled in what officials said Wednesday was an act of vandalism.

"This isn't a simple act of vandalism, which, while bad enough, could be explained by ignorance," superintendent Giovanni Guzzo said, calling it "an act of intimidation."

Spokeswoman Francesca de Lucia said the sheer force needed to topple the large column, which broke into at least five large pieces, suggested that the perpetrators were trying to make a statement.

Authorities were investigating possible motives, including disgruntled employees, but had not ruled out an accidental cause despite the effort needed to make the column fall, she said.

The damage was discovered Monday. Officials at Pompeii believe the vandals broke into the closed excavation of the

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In this photo released by the local "Sovrintendenza" archeological excavation authorities in Pompeii, near Naples southern Italy, a column is seen in pieces on the ground, at a closed site in Pompeii, Wednesday March 21, 2007. The huge column in the garden of an ancient Roman villa at Pompeii was toppled in what officials said Wednesday was an act of vandalism. "This isn't a simple act of vandalism, which, while bad enough, could be explained by ignorance," superintendent Giovanni Guzzo said, calling it "an act of intimidation." (AP Photo/Sovrintendenza Archeologica Pompei, HO) (AP)

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villa over the weekend and apparently climbed up scaffolding to push over the column from above.

Experts who examined the column said it can be restored and put back into its proper place, the statement said.

The ancient city of Pompeii was buried by an eruption of Mount Vesuvius in A.D. 79



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