A tall granite nondescript structure in the middle of fields in Thorurr mandal of Mahabubabad would miss the attention of many. However, a closer look reveals an intricate carving on a stone thrust in the middle. The structure is a watchtower built by the Kakatiyas, who ruled the region for more than three centuries (1052 AD to 1323 AD).

While exploring the square tower built to oversee the Siva Kesava temple in Nanchari Maduru village of Thorurr mandal here as part of the Temple Survey Project, an official of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) stumbled upon a distinctive granite slab embedded into the walls of the tower. The slab depicts Lord Siva blessing Kakatiya ruler Rudrama Devi in a mythical, animal form.

"The discovery of this elegant narrative sculpture is momentous for the archaeological research and most vital for the reconstruction of a few events that might have occurred in the life of Rani Rudrama Devi," said D. Kannan Babu, Superintending Archaeologist, ASI, Chennai.

He said the 13th-century watchtower, which is a little damaged, also explains the hitherto unrevealed significance as a defence bastion of the Kakatiya rulers for safeguarding the region from the enemy surges, including the Kayasthas.

Further describing the intricate carving, Mr. Babu said the rectangular sculptured panel frame represents Rudrama Devi seated on an elephant, holding a sword in her raised right hand. Her left hand carries elephant head gear, with an attendant in tow. A mahout is seen stopping the elephant by holding its trunk with the left hand and a mace in his right.

"The giant animal holds the leg of its mahout with its trunk. Opposite this, in the frame we can see Lord Siva in the form of Sarabhesa Murti, his mythical animal form, appearing before the queen," Mr. Babu said.

After experiencing the Lord's presence at this place, Rudrama Devi might have constructed the temple complex, he speculated. The official believes the slab is one of the rare visual sources on the life of Rani Rudrama Devi.