



Northamptonshire
County Council

Northamptonshire Archaeology

An archaeological watching brief
during Phase 3 of Upton Flood Alleviation Works,
Upton, Northamptonshire
December 2008



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Report 08/209

Northamptonshire Archaeology

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QUALITY CONTROL

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OASIS REPORT FORM

PROJECT DETAILS		
Project name	An archaeological watching brief during Phase 3 of Upton Flood Alleviation Works, Upton, Northamptonshire	
Short description	An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology between April and August 2008 during Phase 3 of Flood Alleviation Works at Upton, Northamptonshire. The work comprised archaeological observation during the stripping of topsoil and subsoil along the line of the new flood defences. Undisturbed soils were recorded throughout the area of observation. No archaeological deposits or any artefacts were present apart from the existing ridge and furrow within Areas 1 & 2.	
Project type	Watching Brief: Site Code UFA07	
Site status	Greenfield	
Previous work	None	
Current Land use	Agricultural/pasture	
Future work	Unknown	
PROJECT LOCATION		
County	Northamptonshire	
Site address	Land on the south bank of the River Nene between Upton and Kislingbury.	
OS Easting & Northing	SP 700, 596 – SP 720, 590	
PROJECT CREATORS		
Organisation	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Project brief originator	Northamptonshire County Council Archaeological Advisor	
Project Design originator	Northamptonshire Archaeology	
Director/Supervisor	David J. Leigh	
Project Manager	Anthony Maull	
Sponsor or funding body	Birse Civils	
PROJECT DATE		
Start date	April 2008	
End date	August 2008	
ARCHIVES	Location (Accession no.)	Content (eg pottery, animal bone etc)
Paper	Northamptonshire Archaeology	Watching brief forms (17) Colour slides (20) black and white contact prints (20) Digital photographs (64)
Digital	Northamptonshire Archaeology	Report text and figures

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**AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL WATCHING BRIEF DURING
PHASE 3 OF UPTON FLOOD ALLEVIATION WORKS
UPTON, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE
APRIL - AUGUST 2008**

Abstract

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology between April and August 2008 during Phase 3 of Flood Alleviation Works, Upton, Northamptonshire. Undisturbed soils were recorded throughout the areas of archaeological observation. No archaeological deposits or artefacts were present apart from the existing ridge and furrow within Areas 1 & 2.

1 INTRODUCTION

An archaeological watching brief was undertaken by Northamptonshire Archaeology between April and August 2008 during Phase 3 of Upton Flood Alleviation Works, on land on the south bank of the River Nene between Kislingbury and Upton, Northamptonshire (NGR: SP 700, 596 – SP 720, 590: Fig 1; Plate 1). The work was carried out on behalf of Birse Civils, in order to fulfil the requirements of a an archaeological condition which had been attached to the planning consent for the flood alleviation works by Northamptonshire County Council Archaeological Advisor. The purpose of the archaeological investigation was to mitigate against the impact of groundworks on any archaeological deposits within the development area.

The fieldwork was carried out in accordance with a written scheme of investigation prepared by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NA 2008) based on a specification produced by Halcrow (Halcrow 2007), who were advised by the former Archaeological Planning Officer for Northamptonshire County Council Historic Environment Team (NCCHET).

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Location and topography

The area of the flood alleviation works is situated on the south bank of the River Nene between Kislingbury and Upton to the south-west of Northampton within the floodplain of the Upper Nene Valley. The site crosses the district boundaries between South Northamptonshire District Council on the eastern side of the development area and Northampton Borough Council on the eastern side. The entire scheme incorporates the floodplain area and comprises water meadow which is currently used as grazing for sheep and cattle.

The underlying geology has been mapped by the British Geological Survey of Great Britain as comprising a mixture of sand and gravel, alluvium and glacial boulder clay, overlying Middle Lias Clay, Mudstone and Ironstone (BGS 1980). The soils belong to the Fladbury 2 soil association, comprising stoneless clayey soils, variably affected by groundwater (SSEW 1983).

2.2 Historical background

The development area lies within an area of known archaeological remains. To the north-east is the site of Duston Roman town. A search of the Historic Environment Record (HER) lists a number of archaeological remains ranging in date from the prehistoric to the post-medieval periods (Fig 2).

These include:

- ◆ Possible prehistoric ditches, investigated between 1991 and 1992 by Northamptonshire Archaeology (NSMR 1475/0/1-2; Jackson 1993a; 1993b, 74-75).
- ◆ Iron-Age pits and ditches, excavated during the widening of the A45 in 1965 (NSMR 5134; Jackson *et al* 1969).
- ◆ An Iron-Age pit alignment, identified during trial trenching (Foard-Colby 2006b) and excavated prior to the construction of the Cross Valley Link Road (CVLR) (Carlyle 2008).
- ◆ Extensive Iron-Age and Roman settlement evidence, together with field systems, recently excavated at Pineham Barn (NSMR 5088/0/1 & 5092/0/6; JSAC 1999; 2000; Buteux & Jones 2000; Morris 2000; Pears 2005; Carlyle 2006 and Brown 2007).
- ◆ An Iron-Age pit alignment and late Iron-Age and Roman settlement, excavated prior to the residential development at Upton (Maull 2000, Foard-Colby 2006a and Foard-Colby and Walker forthcoming). These sites lie to the south and south-west of Duston Roman town.
- ◆ A Saxon *Grubenhous*, excavated during widening of the A45 in 1965 (SMR 5773/0/3; Jackson *et al* 1969,213).
- ◆ Possible Saxon or early medieval ditches, identified from aerial photographs (SMR 5177/0/9).

A Bronze Age cremation was excavated during Phase 2 of the present flood alleviation works (Fig 2). This was located on the north bank of the River Nene to the north-east of Area 1 and comprised of a small pit containing a cremation in a Collard Urn radiocarbon dated to the early 2nd millennium BC, the early Bronze Age. A number of postholes lay nearby; one of which cut the cremation pit and may have been a grave marker (Foard-Colby 2008).

3 OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The aims of the watching brief were to:

- ◆ Provide archaeological monitoring of selected areas of groundworks where there was known potential for the presence of archaeological deposits, or where there was deemed to be areas of archaeological or paleoenvironmental/geoarchaeological potential.
- ◆ To allow contingency arrangements for the treatment of areas of archaeological significance exposed during the groundworks.
- ◆ Determine the date, character, state of preservation and depth of any archaeological deposits observed and to retrieve all datable artefacts.
- ◆ Create a permanent archive and record of the archaeological information collected during the course of the fieldwork and post-excavation analysis.

The fieldwork comprised visits during groundworks in those areas identified as having archaeological potential. Four areas were subject to archaeological observation (Fig 2) these comprised:

Area 1 (Plate 1), which extended along the south bank of the River Nene extending from Kislingbury to the terminus of the Phase 2 works to the east (Plate 3). Area 2 extending around the northern edge of Kislingbury Sports Area within an area of preserved ridge and furrow, in addition an area of topsoil and subsoil stripping was observed during the creation of a haul road between areas 1 and 2.

To the east was located Area 3 (Plate 4), which ran north-east south-west adjacent to the east side of the CVLR rout, and Area 4 extended along the bottom and south-east corner of the former quarry/lakes south-east of the present Upton Mill (Plate 5).

The groundworks were carried out using tracked 360° excavators fitted with a combination of both toothed and toothless buckets (Plate 6). A photographic record in both black and white negative and colour slide was kept, with supplementary photographs in digital format. The written record comprised Northamptonshire Archaeology pro-forma sheets. The watching brief was carried out in accordance with the standards and guidelines for an archaeological watching brief (IFA 2001).

4 THE RECORDED EVIDENCE

4.1 Areas 1 and 2

Ridge and furrow was noted across the field containing Areas 1 and 2, although the groundworks for Area 1 followed an existing modern access track which ran along the south bank of the river and did not cut into the ridge and furrow. The ridge and furrow was orientated approximately north-south with a well pronounced profile and a maximum height of 0.30m between ridge top and furrow base. No additional archaeological features or any artefacts were present.

The stratigraphic sequence within Area 1 (Fig 2) comprised natural grey/brown sand and gravel encountered approximately 0.35m below present ground level. This was overlain by mid grey/brown silt loam subsoil, up to 0.25m thick, containing occasional irregular stones. This in turn was sealed by a topsoil deposit of grey/brown silt loam, up to 0.10m thick, containing numerous irregular stones and gravel.

Area 2 (Fig 2; Plates 7 & 8) cut through the preserved ridge and furrow down onto the surface of the natural substratum. This comprised orange/brown sand and gravel with pockets of grey/blue compact clay. This was overlain by mid brown silt loam subsoil, up to 0.25m thick, containing occasional irregular stones. This in turn was sealed by grey/black silt loam topsoil, up to 0.11m thick, containing occasional irregular stones.

A similar stratigraphy was revealed within the haul road constructed between Area 1 and 2.

4.2 Area 3

The stratigraphic sequence throughout Area 3 comprised natural substrata of orange/brown sand and gravel with pockets of compact grey/blue clay. This was overlain by mid brown silt loam subsoil, up, to 0.20m thick, containing occasional irregular stones. Sealing this was grey/brown silt loam topsoil, up to 0.10m thick, containing occasional irregular stones and occasional fragments of modern ceramic building material. The upper surface of the topsoil has a short grass cover. No archaeological deposits were present.

4.3 Area 4

The stratigraphic sequence in Area 4 comprised natural red/brown ironstone and sand encountered at a depth of 0.30m below present ground surface. This was overlain by mid grey/brown silt loam, up to 0.30m thick, containing occasional irregular stones. No clear topsoil subsoil division could be discerned, nor were any archaeological deposits present.

5 THE SITE ARCHIVE

The project has generated a small archive comprising:

RECORD	NUMBER
Watching brief forms	17
Context sheets	2
Colour slides	20
Black and white contacts and negatives	20
Digital photographs	64

6 CONCLUSIONS

Apart from the extant ridge and furrow across Areas 1 and 2 no archaeological deposits or archaeological artefacts were present within the areas of archaeological observation. Although the overall area in which the watching brief was undertaken, encompassed a relatively large area, the areas subject to archaeological observation were of limited extent. As such the negative results from this investigation do not preclude the possibility that significant archaeological deposits may be present in the vicinity.

The archaeological watching brief was undertaken in favourable conditions and the results are considered to be reliable.

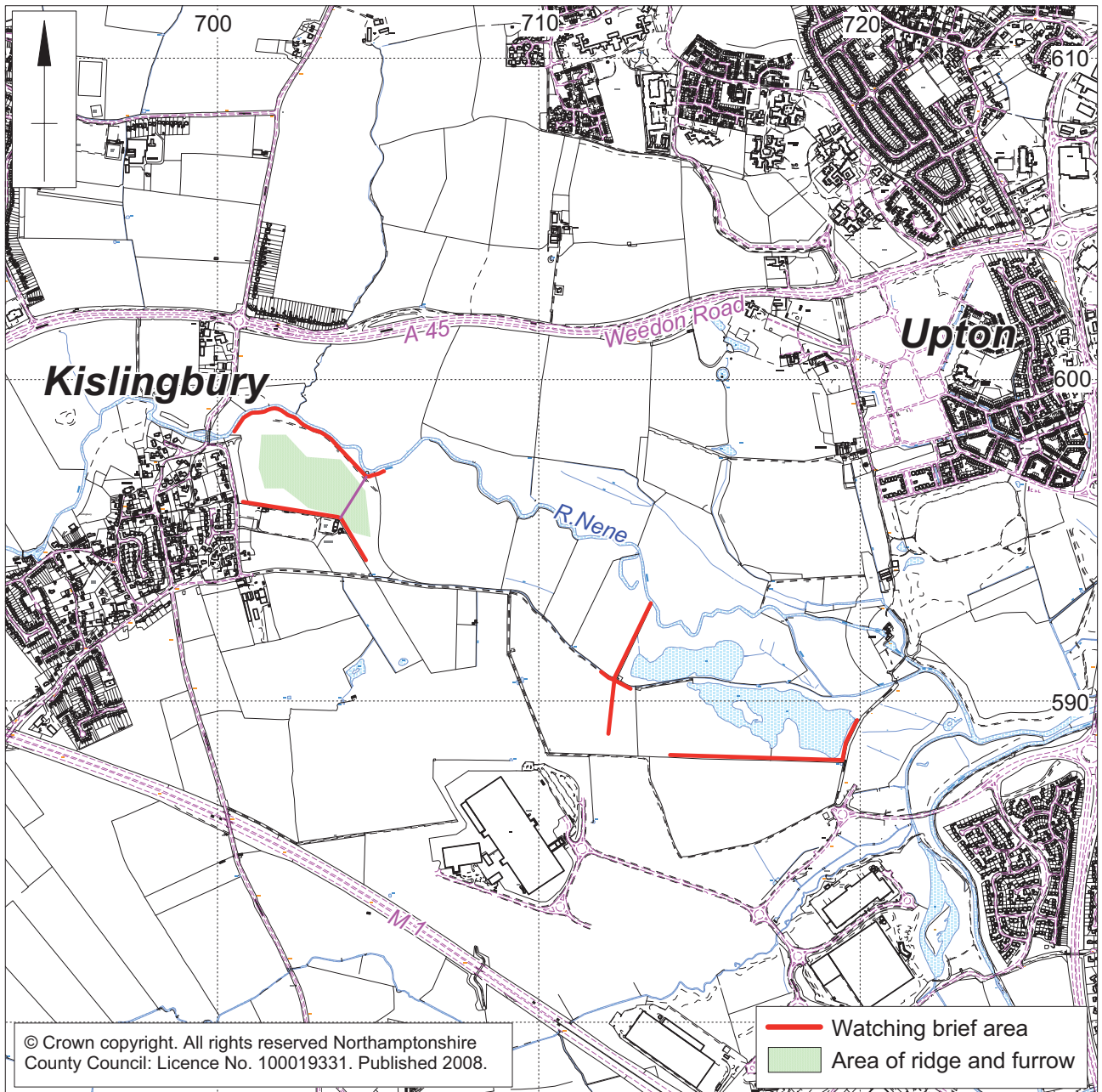
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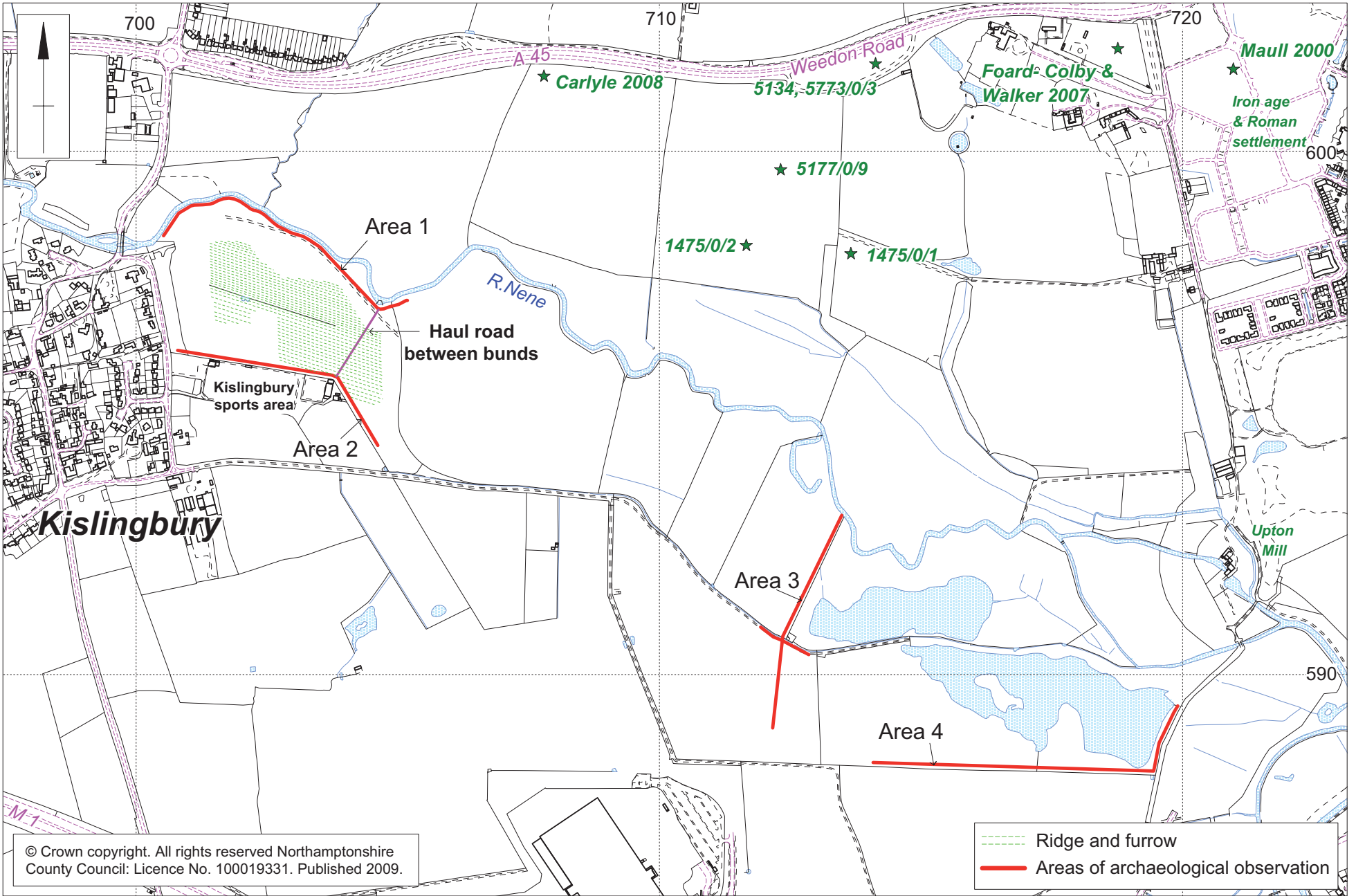
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Scale 1:20,000

Site location Fig 1



Areas of archaeological observation with sites listed on the Historic Environment Record Fig 2



Plate 1: General view across the floodplain with the River Nene on the left



Plate 2: Area 1 extending along the south bank of the River Nene



Plate 3: Area 2 containing well preserved ridge and furrow



Plate 4: View north along Area 3



Plate 5: The former quarries around which Area 4 extends



Plate 6: The groundworks in progress



Plate 7: Area 2 during groundworks showing the dark line of a furrow



Plate 8: The ridge and furrow in Area 2, vehicle illustrates pronounced preservation