Fig. 1. Sites in northeastern Europe with radiocarbon dated Early and Middle Neolithic pottery complexes discussed in the text (white dots) and other sites mentioned (black dots).
Fig. 2. Berezovaya Slobodka II-III, Vologda province, Russia. Excavated area on the northern Bank of River Sukhona (illustration: M. Ivanishcheva, based on survey by V. A. Lobanov, 2014).
Fig. 3. Berezovaya Slobodka II-III, Vologda province, Russia. Stratigraphy of trench 9 of 2014 in the south-western part of the site. 1 – topsoil, 2 – cultural layer of the Bronze Age and Eneolithic, 3 – Early Neolithic cultural layer, 3b – layer with relocated materials of the Final Palaeolithic, 4 – sterile horizon, 5 – Mesolithic cultural layer, 6 – subsoil (illustration: M. Ivanishcheva).
Fig. 4. Berezovaya Slobodka II-III, Vologda province, Russia. Undecorated pottery from Early Neolithic layer 1. 1-4: reconstruction of pottery from a household pit; 5: fragments of vessels no. 1 (from a household pit), 3 and 4. Radiocarbon date from vessel no. 4: Ki-16392a (illustration: M. Ivanishcheva).
Fig. 5. Berezovaya Slobodka, Vologda province, Russia. Calibrated radiocarbon dates from Early Neolithic contexts. Dated materials: Grey – charcoal; red – pottery.

Fig. 6. Veksa 1 and 3, Vologda province, Russia. Location of old excavation trenches (grey) and new test trenches excavated in 2015 and 2016 (red) (illustration: N. G. Nedomolkina, C. Engel).
Fig. 7. Veksa 3, Vologda province, Russia. Stratigraphy at southeastern wall of test trench 1. 1 – spoil heap of previous excavations; 2 – topsoil; 3 – layer 1; 4 – layer 2; 5 – layer 3; 6 – Eneolithic cultural layer 4 with “Porous ware”; 7 – Middle Neolithic cultural layer 5 with Pitted ware complex; 8 – layer 6; 9 – Early Neolithic cultural layer 7, with pottery of the „Northern types“; 10 – Early Neolithic cultural layer 8 (upper part) with pottery of the “2nd Comb Ware complex”, 11 – Early Neolithic cultural layer 8 (lower part) with “2nd Comb Ware complex” and developed Upper Volga culture ware; 12 – transitional zone between layers 8 and 9; 13 – Early Neolithic cultural layer 9, dark lens with early, sparsely decorated, and developed upper Volga culture ware; 14 – lower part of Early Neolithic cultural layer 9, sterile floodplain sediments with some anthropogenic organic lenses; 15 – clayey subsoil; hatched – excavation trench 2000/2001 (illustration: H. Piezonka).
Fig. 8. Veksa 3, Vologda province, Russia. Fragments of pottery from which organic residue samples were dated. 1 – sample MAMS-25493; 2 – sample KIA-49797; 3 – sample KIA-49798; 4 – sample KIA-49799; 5 – sample KIA-33927; 6 – sample KIA-33928; 7 – samples MAMS-27311 and MAMS-27319; 8 – sample SPb-1691; 9 – samples KIA-33926 and KIA-49796 (illustration: N. Nedomolkina, H. Piezonka).
Fig. 9. Veksa 1, 3, Vologda province, Russia. Calibrated radiocarbon dates from Early and Middle Neolithic layers from old trenches and the test trench of 2016 at Veksa 1, and typologically associated material from surface collections. Dated materials: Grey – charcoal; red – charred crust adhering to pottery.
Fig. 10. Veksa 3, Vologda province, Russia. Calibrated AMS radiocarbon dates from Early Neolithic layers in test trench 1 of 2015/2016. Dated materials: Grey – charcoal; red – charred crust adhering to pottery; beige: charred seeds of edible plants.
Fig. 11. Karavaikha 4, Vologda province, Russia. Excavated areas, depressions 1 and 2, upstanding wooden posts, and dated posts and pottery fragments on the bank of River Eloma (illustration: N. Kosorukova).
Fig. 12. Karavaikha, Vologda province, Russia. A – stratigraphy and part of depression 1 in trench 5; B – long posts, square M-16, trench 8; C – short post, square G-19, trench 15 (photos: N. Kosorukova).
Fig. 13. Karavaikha, Vologda province, Russia. Stratigraphy at part of the eastern wall of trench 11. 1 – topsoil, 2 – brown peat, 3 – grey brown peaty silty clay, 4 – black peaty silty clay, 5 – dark green peaty gyttia, 5a – dark green gyttia without peat, 5b – dark green peaty gyttia with wood chips, 6 – light green gyttia without peat, 7 – grey clay, 8 – dark brown buried peat, 9 – grey sand with stones, 10 – light blue clay, dashed line – sand layer, x – main level of finds (illustration: N. Kosorukova).
**Fig. 15: Calibrated ^14C dates from Karavaikha 1 and 4.** Brown – wood; red – charred crust n pottery; yellow – bone.
Fig. 16. Tudozero 5, Vologda province, Russia. Excavated area on the sandy spit between Tudozero and Onega lakes. 1 – limit of settlement site, 2 – borders and numbers of excavation squares, 3 – squares no excavated (illustration: A. Ivanishchev, M. Ivanishcheva).
Fig. 17. Tudozero 5, Vologda province, Russia. Stratigraphy. 1: topsoil (dune sand); 2: Late Medieval cultural layer; 3: cultural layer of developed Medieval period; 4: pinkish sand, without finds; 5: dark yellow sand, without finds; 6: Early Iron Age cultural layer; 7: dark yellow sand, without finds; 8: Early Neolithic cultural layer 1, with Comb ware and Sperrings pottery; 9: dark yellow sand, without finds; 10: Early Neolithic cultural layer 2, with Comb ware; 11: dark yellow sand, without finds; 12: Mesolithic cultural layer; 13: light yellow sand, subsoil (illustration: M. Ivanishcheva).
Fig. 18. Tudozero 5, Vologda province, Russia. Fragments of pottery from which organic residue samples were taken. 1 – sample AAR-17174; 2 – sample AAR-17173 (illustration: H. Piezonka).

Fig. 19. Tudozero 5, Vologda province, Russia. Calibrated $^{14}$C dates from the Early Neolithic layers. Grey – charcoal; red – charred crust.