1949 burial mound excavations (9th-11th), near village of Gnezdovo near Smolensk, an amphora found (OR кърєла). Archeologically dated c 925.

Readings by befuddled Soviet linguists:

1. гороухща. 'mustard'. Impossible linguistically (х-щ)

2. гороушна. 'mustard' (adj). Attested OR word is гороушьна (зърна). The jer (ь) should not be missing. The linguist (Chernyx) is thinking of the Ostromirov evangelie and the phrase 'mustard seed'. But this is not a Biblical text.

3. Горухъ пъса. 'Goruh wrote this.' Unattested personal name; missing jers, unnatural use of aorist. Impossible ligature (х-п-с).

4. гороуща, altered to гороунща, Slavonic variant of ESl гороуча or горюча 'fuel, oil'. N. pl. used as substantive. Unlikely, abstruse.

What's wrong with all this?

Linguistically -- These are attempts to interpret the last letter as a ligature (вязь), such as are unattested in Old Russian. The Soviets didn't have a good knowledge of OR. Stalin taught them that language was what it was supposed to be, not what it was observed to be. (Marr).

Archaeologically -- The early Russians wrote their names on such objects. They did not write «vodka», «salt», «oil», etc. They didn't have kitchens like we do.

They used an ancient possessive adjective, formed with the suffix –j-.

And they wrote their names.

Examples of this suffix: Ярославль (city name), 'town of Jaroslav'. Всеволожь 'belonging to Vsevolod'. Наместъничь 'belonging to the boss (mayor)'. Compare other possessive suffixes: отцов 'father's', Игорев 'Igor's', сестрин 'sister's'. The surname suffix –ов is originally a possessive: Иванов 'belonging to Ivan'.
When the stem ended in –n- or –l-, the sonorant palatalized: гороун 'Goroun' (attested OR name), гороуња or гороуня 'Goroun's (fem. sg.) The missing noun is: кърчага 'amphora', 'pot'. To indicate the softness the writer could use a jotated letter (ia) or he could write a superscribed diacritic, a hook covering both the –n- and the vowel. This is what we see here. The trident is really the vertical stroke of the n and the hook, rather squared.

Goroun was labelling the pot as his, Goroun's. Гороуња.

Many objects in Old Slavic culture are marked with the owner's name in a possessive adjective.
E.g. мънени (сапози) 'Mnen's boots'
M. (on a bucket) = мыслите (name of letter M), hence мыслитен 'Mysljata's'.
Потворинъ пресленъ. 'Potvora's whorl' (the monster's whorl) (magical taboo)
Лолин пресленъ. (Bulgarian) 'Lola's whorl' (cool name).

Oldest riddle, Novgorod (NR) 14th. Clearly Christian:

есть градъ межу нобомъ и землею а к ному еде посолъ без пути самъ нимъ везе грамоту непсану

What do you think is the answer to the riddle?