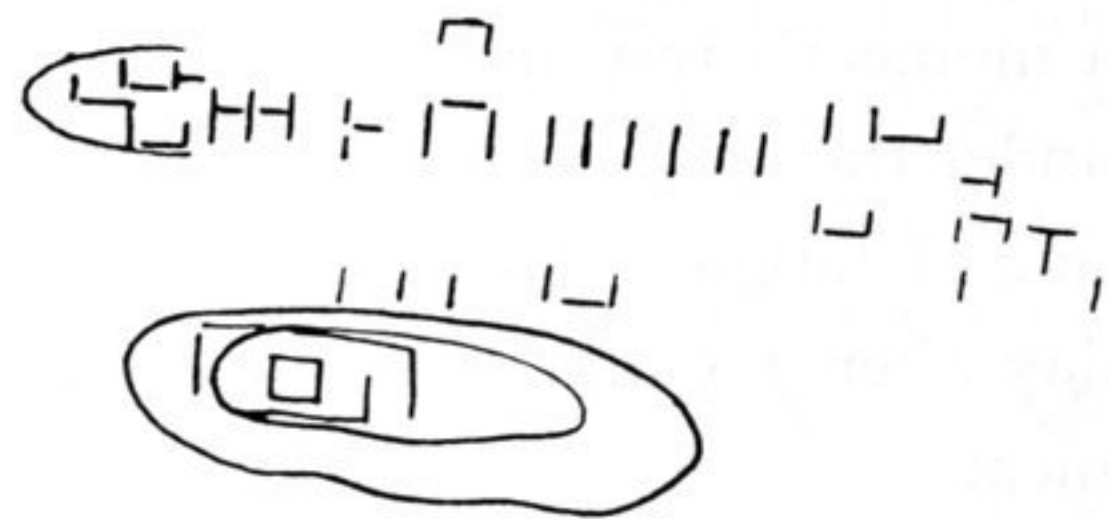


Two young Sart women.

caught sight of the 3 frowning crenellated walls of Chiktam, crowned with a small tower. After riding 27 miles we reached a sarai at the foot of the W wall of the fort.

On a low hill scarcely $\frac{2}{3}$ of a mile S of Chiktam stand what look like the ruins of a small fort. Just S of them there are traces of houses built in a long, narrow row with rather larger buildings at either end. Between them and the mound there are traces of another two buildings and from the long, narrow ruins there is the ruin of a slightly curved wall. It looks approximately like the figure, if viewed from the mound.

Grünwedel made excavations here, too, on his journey to Hami, which encouraged the local population to continue them. I bought a few small clay medallions with Buddha images from them and 4 pages of paper covered with writing. Judging by the condition of the unbaked bricks and the paper, the ruins cannot be very old.



At close quarters the fort looks anything but threatening. The walls are weak (Andijan type), the two lower ones having no passage to the moat. The area itself is narrow and is further encumbered by dark hovels built along all the walls, which are supposed to serve as quarters for the garrison. You can scarcely turn a horse round within the walls and yet the adaptable Chinese have found space for a temple with an entrance enclosed by long clay walls. A cavalry in was originally stationed in this fort that measures no more than $160' \times 154'$. Under changing influences among the higher authorities this force was gradually reduced to $\frac{1}{2}$ in, 1 shao, $\frac{1}{2}$ shao and now consists of only 12 men, who represent a shao. 11 of them had been sent to Turfan to take part in the manoeuvres I had witnessed and a solitary defender was left as the garrison of the fort. There are no Mauser rifles.

Near the W wall of the fort there is a little village of 18 houses (9 Dungan, 7 Sart, 2