As is well known, Greek marble statues of the fourth century B.C. are exceedingly rare, in spite of the fact that marble was at that time a favorite material with sculptors. Many precious works must have perished in the lime kilns. The acquisition by this Museum of two marble figures of that period is therefore something of an event. They are shown on the opposite page, grouped in a restored niche, as they are now exhibited. The various stages in the reconstruction of this group are so typical of detective work in a museum that it may be of interest briefly to recount them.

Some time ago the larger statue was sent to the Museum for inspection, together with a number of fragments found with it. The latter — parts of arms and drapery — could all be fitted on the statue, except a little forearm which was obviously part of a much smaller figure. On inquiry we were told that a smaller figure, said to have been found with the larger one, indeed existed, but that it was cursorily worked and not very important. We asked that the little figure also be sent. The forearm turned out to belong to it. In fact, the figure was almost complete except for the lower right arm and most of the neck, which was restored in modern marble.

The question now came up whether the two statues were in any way related. The marble seemed the same, the style and workmanship were similar, the poses very much alike though reversed, and the garments composed in similar folds with numerous creases running criss-cross over the surface. However, the scale was very different — one statue being a little under life size, the other only about three feet high.

While puzzling over this difficulty we noticed that the eyes of the smaller figure (which had been restored with the head facing straight forward) were carved with the lower eyelids drawn partly over the eyeball (see page 52). She was evidently looking upward — probably at someone taller than herself. Moreover the bulge on the left side of the neck indicated a turn to the left. In other words, she was presumably looking at the other figure. This clue provided a simple solution to the problem. The two figures evidently formed a group similar to those which appear on fourth-century Athenian grave reliefs, consisting of a standing woman with a dreamy, far-away expression and a diminutive figure — represented as a small grownup but intended for a child — wistfully looking up at her (see  

Greek grave relief, IV century B.C. In the Staatliche Museen, Berlin
Two Greek marble statues recently acquired by the Museum.
Late IV century B.C. The niche is restored.
It seemed likely, therefore, that our two figures also served as a tomb group, worked in the round instead of in relief. As the backs are only roughly blocked out, they were obviously not intended to be seen. So the statues were presumably placed in a niche similar to those represented in fourth-century grave reliefs. As this niche has not survived, we have built one in wood to provide the figures with the architectural setting which we felt they needed. The name of the dead woman was probably inscribed on the architrave of the original niche.

The statues are comparatively well preserved. We have restored in plaster only a few missing pieces on arms and drapery and the lower part of the child's neck. The exact turn of the neck was uncertain, but it was at least approximately determined by the likelihood that the girl was looking up at the woman's face—as always in the grave reliefs—not at her right hand. Though the hands are missing we can imagine the action to some extent. The woman grasped a fold of her flowing mantle with her left hand and perhaps held some object in her raised right; the child's right arm was at her side, and she held something in her left hand, perhaps a casket. The woman wears two tunics—a sleeved chiton and a peplos with belted overfold—as well as a mantle, which is fastened on both shoulders and falls down her back; the girl has a peplos with long, belted overfold. Both woman and child wore earrings, for the lobes of their ears are pierced. The earrings were probably the long gold ones with pendants popular in the fourth and third centuries.

In both statues the heads were worked separately from the bodies. The woman's neck ends below in a large, rounded tenon, which fits a corresponding socket at the top of the body. There can be no question, therefore, of the position of her head. A similar socket is at the top of the child's body to receive the missing tenon. The practice of carving the head separately, which of course saved both labor and material, was not uncommon in the fourth and third centuries. It is not necessary,
therefore, to assume that the bodies were made as stock, and the heads later for a particular client. The heads of our figures are not individualized portraits; they are generalized in the regular fourth-century manner, like many on contemporary grave reliefs, and would have been appropriate as representations of any young woman and child of the time. The heads and the bodies are therefore presumably contemporary works and are very likely by the same artist. The superiority in quality of the woman’s head is easily accounted for, since in a tomb group a sculptor would have paid special attention to the head of the person commemorated.

We have an important clue for the height at which the figures were placed in the exaggerated curve of the woman’s chest, which must have been concealed behind the rising fold of drapery (see page 53). This technical device, which is common on works of this period, was doubtless intended to avoid a deep groove that would collect water, and so it performed a useful function, though such a departure from nature would have been disturbing if seen by the spectator. We have therefore placed the statues fairly high, though perhaps not as high as they were originally; for we know that in the fourth-century cemetery of the Athenian Kerameikos family monuments were sometimes placed on platforms ten to twenty-five feet in height.

A few tomb statues of the general style of our figures are known. One which somewhat resembles our woman is in the Louvre, another in the National Museum, Athens. Two small headless statues of children remarkably like ours have also survived and have been tentatively identified as subsidiary figures of tomb groups. Several Athenian grave reliefs are known with figures in such high relief that they are almost in the round. Archaeologists have therefore suspected for some time that, in addition to the grave reliefs, there were groups of statues in Attic burial plots. If we have correctly interpreted our statues they are the first of this kind known to us.

It is not likely that there were other figures in our group; for if there had been, the
woman would presumably have been related to them in a particular action—a handshake, for instance, as often on the grave reliefs. Instead she is self-contained, looking into space.

We can determine the date of our statues fairly exactly. Stylistic comparisons point to the later fourth or the early third century B.C. In a number of statues and reliefs of that period we find similar stances, similar creased draperies and headdresses, and relatively small heads, like ours. We may compare especially the figure of Athena on a “record” relief with the names of the archons Kephisodoros (323/322 B.C.) and Archippos (318/317), and the Athena on a “record” relief dated 295/294 B.C. In both these reliefs, moreover, the figures are isolated from one another, as in our group. And we have still another landmark. If our statues served as an Attic tomb memorial they must have been made before the famous “anti-luxury” decree of Demetrios of Phaleron, which forbade the erection of sculptured gravestones in Attica, limiting memorials to small stone pillars and
other simple markers. The decree must have been promulgated sometime during the ten years that Demetrios was in power, that is, between 317 and 307, perhaps early in that decade. Not until the second century B.C. did sumptuous grave monuments reappear in Attica.

The later fourth century was the time when the influence of the great sculptors Praxiteles, Skopas, and Lysippos was paramount. In the charming head of our woman, in particular, with its delicate, oval face and serene expression, we can feel the spirit of these masters’ creations. Something of the radiance with which Praxiteles imbued his works is reflected in the quiet loveliness of our group.

The statues are said to have been found in Athens a long time ago. They are of Pentelic marble, 53\(\frac{3}{8}\) and 38 inches high; the accession numbers are 44.II.2 and 44.II.3. The illustration on page 49 is taken from H. Diepolder, Die attischen Grabreliefs des 5. und 4. Jahrhunderts v. Chr., pl. 37.