The Architectural and Cultural Reception of
the Temple of Apollo at Bassai and its Frieze

This project is an analysis of how this Classical Greek temple and important
UNESCO world heritage site, situated in ancient Arcadia, has impacted on
art, architecture and academia, creating new narratives within specific social,
political and religious contexts.

The marble frieze that adorned the temple was created in the aftermath of
the Peloponnesian War (431–404 B.C.) and is artistically characterised by a
continuous rapid display of violence. Its unsettling effect is similar to that of
Picasso’s La Guernica (1937) which was a response to the Spanish Civil War.

Television pictures from modern wars, showing terrified women fleeing with
children, contrasted with the now familiar images of pro-active female
combat soldiers, all find parallels in the Bassai frieze in the form of passive
violated Greek women and their antithesis, female Amazon warriors.

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