

Bakogianni A. (2023) “Women in Captivity: The Human Cost of Armed Conflict from the Trojan War to Modern Greek Cinema”, in K. P. Nikoloutsos (ed), *Brill’s Companion to Ancient Greek and Roman Warfare on Film*, Brill, 273-91.

In our surviving tragic corpus, the most frequently referenced mythical example of total war is the conflict at Troy, its prequel (the sacrifice of Iphigenia) and its aftermath (the fate of the captured Trojan women and their Greek counterparts). In their ancient context, the dramas that explore the theme of war balanced the *kleos* to be won in battle, with an acknowledgement of its human cost. In the turbulent twentieth century, however, Greek tragedy became a powerful weapon in the arsenal of the anti-war movement. Both stage and film directors and their collaborators valorised the suffering of women and children and co-opted their voices to oppose both past and contemporary conflicts, violence, and irredentist politics. The Trojan War became a focal point for such creative re-politicisation efforts that drew explicit parallels between ancient and contemporary wars. In our ocular-centric culture, cinematic receptions of the famous ancient conflict stressed the human cost of war and brought greater immediacy and new audiences.

In the 1970s, Michael Cacoyannis (1922-2011) and Theo Angelopoulos (1935-2012), two key figures in Modern Greek Cinema, explored war’s tragic consequences on women and children with reference to this famous ancient example of the destruction of a city. The two rival filmmakers adopted very different approaches to translocating the Trojan War onto the silver screen. Cacoyannis, the only filmmaker to produce a trilogy of films based on ancient Greek tragedy, located the action of his cinematic receptions in an imagined ancient space. Despite the director’s emphasis on the universality of Greek tragedy, his *The Trojan Women* (1971) and *Iphigenia* (1977) condemn the Greek junta (1967-1974) and the invasion of Cyprus (1974). Angelopoulos, on the other hand, locates the action of his *The Travelling Players* (1975) in modern Greece, but draws on the ancient story of Electra and Orestes’ vengeance to deepen his portrayal of the modern tragedy of the Nazi occupation (1941-1944), the Civil War (1946-49) and their long-term consequences. The classical allusions add depth and resonance to his meditation of modern Greek history, but they also problematise the modern state’s claim of a ‘special relationship’ with ancient Greek culture, which Cacoyannis chose instead to capitalise on. This chapter draws on previous scholarship on the classical connections in the two independent directors’ oeuvre, to offer a new synthesis that compares their cinematic receptions of the myth of the Trojan War and its portrayal in Greek tragedy. It analyses how the contemporary focus on the human cost of war shaped their interpretation of their classical sources.