

## **The Case of Corax and Tisias**

### **Background of the case**

- Corax and Tisias are reputedly the inventors of the art of rhetoric.

### **Facts of the case**

- Tisias contracts to pay Corax for instruction in rhetoric on the condition that he wins his first lawsuit.
- Corax instructs Tisias in rhetoric.
- Tisias refuses to pay.
- Corax sues Tisias in court for payment.

### **Tisias's argument**

- If I win, I do not need to pay.
- If I lose, I should not have to pay. For if I lose, it proves that Corax's instruction is worthless.

### **Corax's argument**

- If I win, Tisias must pay.
- If I lose, Tisias should have to pay. For if I lose, it proves that I have taught Tisias well.

### **Judgment**

- If you are the judge, who should win? Why?
- In the original case, the judge threw the case out of court, concluding "Kakou korakos kakon won" (A bad egg from a bad crow).

### **What the case of Corax and Tisias tells us about rhetoric**

- Language is ambiguous.
- Knowledge is constructed by human beings.
- There are at least two sides in every case—often more.
- Persuasion does not deal in certainties but rather probabilities.
- The need for action obviates the need for absolute truth.