At the beginning of Book 3 Aristotle writes:

τρία ἐστὶν ἃ δεῖ πραγματευθῆναι περὶ τὸν λόγον, ἐν μὲν ἐκ τίνων αἱ πίστεις ἔσονται, δεύτερον δὲ περὶ τὴν λέξιν, τρίτον δὲ πῶς χρὴ τάξαι τὰ μέρη τοῦ λόγου

There are three matters that need to be treated in discussion of speech: first, what will be the sources of proofs, second, concerning the style, and third, how the parts of a speech must be arranged.¹

Aristotle went into the first of these aspects at length in the previous books, and devoted to the second and third chapters 1–12 and 13–19 in Book 3. What role does the classification in three genres play in the domains of the style (λέξις) and arrangement (τάξις)? What new elements does Book 3 introduce in the definition of the genres? Are there any differences in their characterization with respect to Books 1 and 2?

The first variation we can register concerns the deliberative genre: the γένος συμβουλευτικὸν does not appear in Book 3, where it is always a question of γένος δημηγορικὸν.² Certainly this is the same genre, whose function is the advice (συμβουλή). And nonetheless the change in denomination has a precise value. It determines a restriction in the horizon of the γένος: while in Book 1 the συμβουλευτικὸν included forms of advice addressed to a single recipient, the δημηγορικὸν only covers speeches to the popular assembly (δημηγορίαι), and Aristotle only deals with these in his expositions of the λέξις and τάξις.

13.1 THE STYLE

“One should not forget that a different style is appropriate for each genre” (δεῖ δὲ μὴ λεληθέναι ὅτι ἄλλη ἑκάστῳ γένει ἁρμόττει λέξις): thus begins chapter 12, the last of those devoted to the treatment of the λέξις.³ Aristotle

¹ 1403b6–8.
² As pointed out above, a similar alternation of the name already figures in Book 1. Cf. supra chap. 10.2.
³ 1413b3–4 (T. 72).
outlines a division between λέξις γραφική ("written style") and λέξις ἀγωνιστική ("agonistic style"), characterizing the former as ἀκριβεστάτη ("most exact") and the latter as ὑποκριτικωτάτη ("very much a matter of delivery"). The λέξεις pertaining to the three genres are defined in relation to these two more general typologies: to the λέξις γραφική belongs the ἐπιδεικτική, to the ἀγωνιστική are assigned the δημηγορική and δικανική. To fully grasp the resemblances and differences between the λέξεις ἐπιδεικτική, δημηγορική, and δικανική, it is indispensable first to clarify the meaning of the distinction between "written style" and "agonistic style". In his progress towards a complete definition of the genres, Aristotle was forced to confront an important and complex issue to which his master Plato had already paid attention, that of the value and mechanisms of orality and writing.

The distinction between written and agonistic style, which was to have some currency among later rhetoricians, is prefigured in distinctions that had already been drawn in the preceding tradition, in particular that between γραφικὸς λόγος ("written speech") and αὐτοσχεδιαστικὸς λόγος ("improvised speech"). During the 4th century the superiority of one or other form of expression was the object of a querelle between two pupils of Gorgias, Alcidamas and Isocrates. Alcidamas praised the ability of the αὐτοσχεδιαστικὸς λόγος to adapt perfectly to the requisites

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4 1413b4–5 (T. 72).
5 1413b9.
6 1414a18 (T. 75): "is most like writing" (ἡ μὲν οὖν ἐπιδεικτικὴ λέξις γραφικωτάτη).
7 1413b4–5 (T. 72): οὐ γὰρ ἡ αὐτὴ γραφικὴ καὶ ἀγωνιστικὴ, οὐδὲ δημηγορικὴ καὶ δικανικὴ ("the written and agonistic <style> are not the same; nor the demeogoric and the judicial").
8 On orality and writing in the ancient world see in particular Havelock (1963) and Id. (1986).
9 It is recalled in the Pseudo-Demetrius' On Style (Eloc. 193–194, cf. 226, 271) and in Philodemus' Rhetoric 2, P Herc 1674 col. 21.17–23 p. 87 Longo Auricchio (T. 107), echoed by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (Iso. 22–3, Dem. 18.3) and Quintilian (Inst. 3.8.61–64 with explicit reference to Aristotle, cf. 12.10.49–57). Both Cicero, Orat. 208 and Rhet. Her. 3.13.23 recall, even if less explicitly, the chapter of Aristotle's Rhetoric.
10 As seen especially in the Platonic dialogues, the Sophistic knowledge was practiced in both these forms. On Gorgias' skill in improvisation, of which he himself boasted, see Grg. 447c and Men. 70b–c; according to Philostratus (VS 482), Gorgias inaugurated the practice of making speeches extemporaneously whereas Prodicus favored written speeches. Cf. O'Sullivan (1996) 122. On written conferences of Sophists see Plato, Hp. Ma. 286b4; 287b6; Hp. Mi. 363b2; 364b6; Euthyd. 275a4; and Xenophon, Mem. 2.1.21.
11 The superiority of the αὐτοσχεδιαστικὸς over the γραφικὸς λόγος is the theme of Alcidamas' On the Sophists, in which Isocrates seems to be the target. The difference between