

DESTINY OF THE HOMELAND IN
THE PARLIAMENTARY ADDRESSES OF
MAURYCZY FRANCISZEK KARP

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The article analyses six public speeches in the Sejm, delivered at the Four-Year Sejm by a political figure of Polish and Lithuanian state, publicist, member of the Four-Year Sejm, participant of the 1794 Uprising, Maurycy Franciszek Karp (1749–1817). Four of them were delivered after the declaration of the May 3rd Constitution of 1791, and utilising addresses delivered by other politicians of the time: Hugo Kołłątaj (1750–1812), Tadeusz Kościłkowski (ca. 1750–?), Marcin Leżeński (apie 1760–?), Jan Jeleński (ca. 1740–1807) and Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz (1758–1841).

In the parliamentary speeches of Karp we can see how persuasively and vividly is political situation of the nation revealed, how key values of the Age of the Enlightenment – freedom, equality, justice – are emphasized and explained. Just as other politicians of the time, Karp, by emphasizing natural rights to freedom and equality and justice equally accessible to all, reveals the greatness of an individual: freedom to think and freely express views without the rigid control of religions institutions. Topically, and because of the same concerns, the Sejm speeches of Karp are related to other texts of the same genre, in which, due to political and cultural situation of the late eighteenth century, the theme of destiny of the homeland and love thereof becomes of key importance.

Karp's parliamentary addresses are notable for their emotions and vividness, bounty of epithets, metaphors, rhetorical cry-outs and questions. They can be noted not only for the graphic layout of the text, but also for the reportage-like images, relaying the narrative of events dynamically and persuasively, for the author was also the observer. Karp's Sejm addresses meet one of the most important requirements for the rhetoric of the Enlightenment – to teach people through carefully chosen words supplying them with the wisdom of life and practical advice, also to strengthen the sense of public duty and promote actions on behalf of the homeland.

Keywords: speech, rhetoric, freedom, justice, Age of the Enlightenment, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania.