In the present text I’m going to present David Railton, a key figure in the birth of the Unknown Soldier’s cult in Great Britain. David Railton was born in 1884 in Stoke Newington London. He had two brothers, David and Nathaniel and a sister, Esther. David was educated by private tutors before attending Macclesfield Grammar as a boarder. David and Nathaniel went up to Keble College and both were led to ordination in the Church of England. David Railton was ordained deacon in 1908 and priest in 1909 by the Bishop of Liverpool. He was appointed curate in the working class parish of St Dunstans’s.
Like many other clergy at that time, he volunteered to serve there as an Army chaplain on the French front.
It was there in the battlefield that he had the idea of the Unknown Warrior’s cult. In his book he wrote “The idea came to me, I know not how, in the early part of 1916 after returning from the line after dusk to a billet at Erkingham near Armentieres. At the back of the billet was a small garden and in than garden, only about six paces from the house, there was a grave. At the head of the grave stood a white cross of wood on which was written in deep black pencilled letters, An Unknown Soldier of The Black Watch. How I longed to see his folk! But who was he and who were they?”.
In 1920 David wrote to the Dean of Westminster to suggest his idea that was accepted. On 11 November 1920 the Unknown Soldier was buried in Westminster Abbey. David Railton donated the Union Flag that he used during the war to the Abbey, that was first used to cover the Unknown Soldier’s coffin, while now hangs close to his grave. After that he was appointed to St John’s church. He served in other churches, too, before serving with the RAF during the Second World War and finally retiring.
David died on 1955 in a railway accident.
The language used in the texts is simply and accessible for everyone, the prevalent tense used is simple past because texts report historical facts. Texts don’t present any rhetorical figures in order to make the reading as easy as possible.