The British Unknown Soldier

The documents taken in exam present lots of similarities. The main theme is the Unknown Soldier’s history, they presents the steps of the concretization of the idea of the military chaplain David Railton who found in France a makeshift grave with the inscription “An Unknown British Soldier” in 1916. So, to build a grave which would have contained an unknown soldier, Railton wrote to the Dean of Westminster who helped him to carry out the project. Four bodies from different battlefields were taken to Northern France in 1920, where the general Wyatt selected one. The coffin was built in England. The body was transported by the HMS Verdun from Italy to Dover. When the coffin arrived in London a ceremony took place, with the presence of the royal family and choirs which sang hymns on the anniversary of the armistice in 1920. It was an effective a procession from the Cenotaph to Westminster Abbey which received an impressive visit by people from all parts of Great Britain, so it is one of the most important war memorials in the world. It ends with an interesting text: “They buried him among the kings, because he had done good toward God and toward his house”. It underlines that the sacrifice of the Unknown Soldier was for a honest purpose, he died for his country and his values, so it exalts the patriotism which was typical for the First World War which was based on territorial ambitions and national interests.

General Pershing assigned the Congressional Medal of Honour to the British Unknown Soldier on 17th October 1921. It was a political strategy to reinforce the existing alliance between “her majesty’s government” and the American Congress. For years a Union Jack covered the coffin in Westminster Abbey.

The tomb is considered a war memorial as the Cenotaph, but it has another meaning: the Cenotaph represents all soldiers who fell in the Great War for the country and the king, the Unknown Soldier’s grave represents all dead in the First World War who had been not identified, who didn’t have a tomb. The burial of the Unknown Soldier had the function of commemorating the dead of the First World War that represents soldiers who died for their country without identification and it is useful to remember them as is the function of a war memorial.

The documents are organized into paragraphs, each of them tells about a particular step of the Unknown Soldier’s history or about a theme, they are informative text. The intelligent reader understands that the aim of the documents is to provide information about the Unknown Soldier’s history. They use a formal language, but the reader is someone which is interested to find information about this argument.