Both Southey and Coleridge had their early verses published in the newspapers (Magnuson 41–2). Southey later told Henry Taylor that in 1798 Daniel Stuart offered him “a guinea a week to supply verses for the *Morning Post*” (Speck 71). In November 1797, Coleridge had agreed with Stuart to provide “verses or political essays” on a regular basis and at a similar “pittance” of a guinea (CL 1: 360). At the beginning of the third volume of *Letters from England*, Southey, speaking through the fictitious Don Manuel Alvarez Espriella, complains of government-controlled daily newspapers “in which all their measures are defended, their successes exaggerated, their disasters concealed or palliated, and the most flattering prospects constantly held out to the people” (LE 3: 25). Espriella reckons that, if the ministerial wartime estimates of Frenchmen killed were added together, “they would be found equal to all the males in the country capable of bearing arms” (LE 3: 25–6). It was to counter such propagandist reports that, a decade earlier, Coleridge launched his own shortlived weekly journal, the *Watchman*. Running from March to May 1796, it evaded the 1795 Gagging Acts by reprinting (without comment) articles and news items already published elsewhere—and adding editorial emphasis by a liberal use of italics and exclamation marks. The *Watchman* was distributed largely through the Unitarian network (Andrews 2003: 116–17). In the late1790s, Southey had relied on the Unitarian editor, Richard Phillips, when contributing translations of Spanish and Portuguese poetry to the *Monthly Magazine*. And it was Arthur Aikin, the Unitarian editor of the *Annual Review*,

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who enlisted Southey as a reviewer in the new journal’s first issue of 1803. Southey’s opening review was of *Periodical accounts relative to the Baptist Missionary Society for propagating the gospel among the heathen*. Kenneth Curry’s analysis in the *Bulletin of Bibliography* (16: 195–7) records no fewer than 33 titles reviewed by Southey in the *Annual Review*’s second issue.

Not surprisingly, Southey found so much reviewing sheer drudgery, and a great contrast to his eight months as secretary to the chancellor of the exchequer for Ireland, which (according to his son, Cuthbert) had “afforded him a large share of time for his literary pursuits” (*L&C* 2: 181). As he wrote to his naval brother, Tom, in October 1803: “My reviewing, more than ordinarily procrastinated, stands still. I began Clarke’s book, and having vented my gall there, laid the others all by till the first of November that I might be free till then for a work more agreeable. My main work has been Madoc” (*L&C* 2: 229–31). J. S. Clarke, whose *Progress of maritime discovery* Southey savaged, nevertheless became historiographer royal—an appointment that Southey himself coveted. *Madoc* was not the only “agreeable” work that Southey needed time for. In January 1803, he was writing to John Rickman about the books he still needed for his projected history of monasticism: “I have thirteen folios of Franciscan history in the house, and yet want the main one, Wadding’s Seraphic Annual, which contains the original bulls.” But meanwhile his *Annual Review* commitments require “that I must lay aside old chronicles and review modern poems; instead of composing from a full head, that I must write like a school-boy upon some idle theme on which nothing can be said or ought to be said” (*L&C* 2: 200). Six months later, he told Coleridge about his proposed seven-volume *Bibliotheca Britannica*, for which he had just concluded a contract with Longman. Southey envisaged that, after three volumes devoted to English poetry and prose, the fourth volume would take up “the history of metaphysics, theology, medicine, alchemy, common, canon and Roman law, from Alfred to Henry VII,” besides “a grand article on the philosophy of the theology of the Roman Catholic religion.” The remaining three volumes would encompass post-Reformation theology—“the spirit of the theology of all the other parts of Christianity”—together with “all the articles you can get, on all the separate arts and sciences that have been treated of in books since the Reformation” (*L&C* 2: 217–19).

Perhaps it was just as well that Longman abandoned the project because of what Southey, in a letter to Grosvenor Bedford on November 10, called “the universal panic that followed the return of