Answers to the questions which arose from the examination of the Chronicler’s version of Josiah’s reform in Chapter 2 above now can be attempted:

(1) Why did the Chronicler locate the burning of the bones of priests in “Judah and Jerusalem” (v. 5) and not in the North (vv. 6–7)? Only 2 Kgs. 23:16 explicitly puts Josiah on the scene of the action, personally supervising the removal of bones from their tombs and their burning upon an altar. In the preceding chapter it was shown that the original location of this episode probably was Jerusalem, in the immediate vicinity of the Mount of Olives where the bamoth attributed to Solomon and dedicated to certain foreign deities were also defiled (v. 13). This would explain why the Chronicler located his reference to bone-burning in the south (34:5a): he had before him an unaugmented version of Kings which caused him to do so.

(2) What is the physical relationship between the altars and the hammanim which Josiah destroys in “Judah and Jerusalem,” and what is the basis of this notice (v. 4a)?

Josiah’s precise location is not given in Kings: he may or may not be envisioned to be actually on “the mountain” when he “turns” and sees tombs “there” (v. 16α). If the Chronicler envisioned Josiah “in front of” (лепанэьву) “the altars of the Baals” (or “altars of the Baals”) supervising their demolition at the foot of the Mount of Olives, in the Kidron or eastern Ben-Hinnom Valley (34:4), Solomon’s bamoth could fairly be said to be “above” them. The chthonic associations of the Mount of Olives and the Wadi Kidron have already been noted. 23:13 locates Solomon’s bamoth “on the right of the mountain of corruption,” suggesting the southern part of the ridge known today as the Mount of Olives, opposite the “City of David”; Christian tradition places them atop Ras el-Amud/Batin el-Hawa, into the lower slope of which the Silwan necropolis was cut (see
Illustration)—a juxtaposition of no little significance if the tradition has a basis in fact.

Two additional factors support this explanation:

- In view of the Chronicler’s uniformly glowing representation of Solomon, he most certainly would not have credited him with building installations for the worship of foreign deities. Instead of omitting 23:13, he offered an interpretative précis utilizing the late term *hammānîm*, probably meaning “sanctuaries, shrines” (as Palmy. *hmn*) and thus semantically closer to *bāmōt* than to *mīzbeḥāt* (precluding the possibility that the hammanim were positioned “on top of” the altars), perhaps prompted in part by its phonetic resemblance to *hinnom*.

- Secondly, the Chronicler supposed that more than “passing sons/children through fire” (28:3b and 33:6aa, both adapted from Kings) took place in the Ben-Hinnom Valley, for he adds to his account

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1 See Ussishkin, *Village of Silwan*, 322.
3 E.g., “the Chronicler’s portrayal of a faultless Solomon would require omission of 2 Kgs. 23:13 as out of accord with that portrait” (Dillard, *2 Chronicles*, 278).