Thelle has categorised all occurrences of בְּלַע in BH, in which the largest category consist of verses bearing the meaning “fall upon someone, to kill or inflict violence”. She places Isa. 53:12 in the same category as do most exegetes: “plead”, “beg”, “make entreaty”, together with the other hi. occurrences: Isa. 59:16, Jer. 15:11, 36:25. However, she comments that there are many problems with the interpretation of Isa. 53:12. לְַיָּפִּ֥יָּב in Isa. 53:12 has almost unanimously been translated as “intercede” and interpreted as an expression for vicarious suffering, although many comment on the difficulties of this interpretation, cf. Westermann, who translates: “[he] made intercession for the transgressors”, explaining that hi. of בְּלַע with the prep. בְּ “to cause to light upon” in Isa. 53:6 becomes “to make entreaty”, cf. Jer. 36:25. Westermann continues:

Used absolutely it means “to intervene”, as in Isa. 59:16. This does not mean, as some editors imagine, that he made prayers of intercession for them, but that with his life, his suffering and his death, he took their place and underwent their punishment in their stead

cf. Muilenburg, Kutsch, Hermisson, Clifford, Blenkinsopp and Koole.

Dahood regards the Qumran rendering a defective hi. and renders v. 12b as “[he] made entreaty for the rebellious”.

Payne comments that neither Torrey nor Driver, in their comments on the word play in Deutero-Isaiah, attend to the repeated root בְּלַע

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114 Thelle, Ask God, p. 242.
115 Thelle, Ask God, p. 242. The sixth and last hi occurrence of בְּלַע, Job 36:32, is unclear.
120 Clifford, Fair Spoken and Persuading, p. 175.
Payne comments: “It is my view that having used the word recently (in verse 6), the writer found it came readily to mind at verse 12, though now in a different sense”. Whybray also argues for an intended word play between 53:6 and v. 12:

Yahweh imposed (הפגיﬠ) upon the Servant a punishment which he did not deserve (verse 6), whereas the Servant יפגיﬠ (interceded) for the sinners (verse 12). The word-play is intended to bring out the contrast between the behaviour of the Servant and his fellows.

ii. “INTERVENE”

Hägglund argues against the common translation “intercede”, and suggest rather “intervene”, which he regards as more open and with less theological implications. According to him, this understanding fits better with the context: in Isa. 53, the servant is silent and does not perform any active action.

iii. “FALL UPON”

Snaith translates v. 12b as “And-with-reference-to-the-rebels it-was-caused-to light (on him)”. He explains:

We find here no thought of “interceding for” the rebels, and no vicarious suffering in the sense that the Servant suffered in order to save the rebels. The writer is stating the plain fact that the Servant did not deserve the suffering and disaster, and because he did not deserve it, it must necessarily be the case that he will prosper and triumph... It is unfortunate that the English Versions... have “made intercession for” in 53:12, because this phrase involves conscious and deliberate self-sacrifice for others and a pleading with God on their behalf. No one would dream that the same verb (and also the hiph'il form) is used in v. 6 and there

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