

Math Forum - Problem of the Week

The Oracle's Oration [Problem #2768]

Two travelers stop by the side of the road to eat. The first, Amani, has seven bread rolls, while the second, Biagio, has five. A third person, Caleb, stops and asks if Amani and Biagio would be willing to share their rolls. They are, and each of the three eats four rolls.

Upon departing, Caleb leaves behind twelve silver pieces as payment for the rolls. Amani thinks that she should have seven of the pieces since she began with seven rolls, and that Biagio should get five, since he started with five rolls. Biagio, however, thinks that they should each get six pieces of silver, since they shared the rolls equally.

Since they can't agree, they go to the Oracle. Once they have explained the situation, the Oracle speaks:

"Amani, you should get nine silver pieces. Biagio, you should get three. I've determined this because"

How did the Oracle explain this?

Extra: Is there another decision the Oracle could have made about the payment? What might it have been and how would the Oracle have explained it?

