



Tetrarchy

Team play, 2 vs. 2 Earls



Diocletian's tetrarchy failed to hold the Roman Empire together. One Augustus and one Caesar always fell upon the other Augustus and the other Caesar. Ancient history has taught us that powerful regional teams will never work together for long. Each team in such a conflict has the power to rule alone, save for the presence of their great rivals!

Tetrarchy is a team format. You and your teammate are in a pair of Duels. You sit next to each other, sharing each other's fate, conferring and seeking guidance... while facing your own opponent.

Two Duels, One table

At first glance, these two Duels may look unconnected but the rules of the Tetrarchy link them in subtle and important ways. These links can tip the balance and ensure your team gains the upper hand.

This variant operates differently than Two-Headed Earl, the other team format of Ortus Regni. Tetrarchy is faster and simpler, yet it still provides a team play experience.

Victory Condition

Using the normal elimination rules of Ortus Regni, when one Earl is eliminated the game has resolved. The team with two surviving Earls has won the Kingdom!

Tournament Rules

Tetrarchy uses Ortus Regni's Tournament Rules: "Two turns, Two Towers". Earls have 2 free Towers at the start of the game. And Earls cannot Attack or use Treachery or Intrigue cards on each other for the first two rounds.

Seating

Teammates sit next to each other - on one side of the table - facing their Dueling opponents directly across from them.

The Earl who sits on the right side of each team can be considered the senior member of that team. They will go first on their side, and the Vikings could also be placed to their right.

Set-up

Players can either choose their Dueling opponents by consensus, or use the Viking bag to determine how the teams will face-off. If there is any disagreement, use the bag.

Once seating has been decided players should design their Earl decks. It is often useful to discuss your plans with your teammate, this can be done in private.

After decks have been made, place cubes in the Viking bag to determine first player and Viking placement. It is only necessary to place a cube from the Earls on the right side of both teams for this draw.

The Vikings will be placed only to the right of these players. In other words, the Vikings will only be on the right or left side of the overall table, and never placed between two teammates. And the starting player will always be on the right side of their team.

The Viking bag can then be prepared for the play, with 1 cube from each Earl.

Once the Vikings are placed the game can start with the designated first player taking their turn. Their teammate will go next. And play will proceed around the table.

Remember that Tournament Rules gives all Earls 2 turns of protection at the start of the game. The 2 black Viking timing markers that will come out over these rounds is a good way to track this.

The Duels of the Tetrarchy

Each Earl can only Attack the rival Earl that they are in a Duel with or use Treachery or Intrigue cards on them. These Duels are distinct struggles. Only a couple of table wide powers and effects, listed below, allow for interaction between these two Duels.

Vikings

Even though there are 4 Earls in this game the Vikings do not operate as they would in a normal 4 player game.

- ♦ The Vikings will only be located to the right or left of a team.
- ♦ The Vikings will arrive with 3 cards, as in a normal Duel. And they will be active when they have 3 or more cards.

- ♦ Whenever there is combat anywhere on the table - before the Vikings' arrival - the white marker will be pushed forward as normal.

Thus, the Vikings will often arrive later than they would in a typical Duel.

- ♦ If you gain control of the Vikings you can direct them to Attack any target on the table that you wish, i.e. any Earl is a valid target.

The King card

The King card is acquired in Tetrarchy in the normal manner. An Earl must have 2 more Banners out than any other Earl to earn it. And every other Earl, regardless of team, must then offer an Army card to the Royal Army if they have one in their Army card pool.

The Cathedral & Church Decides

The Cathedral does not stop your teammate from Bequeathing!

The Cathedral does prevent your rivals from Bequeathing, a rival Earl must still possess a Church to Bequeath.

The Church Decides power works as expected. If you have this power you can use it in a Battle involving any Earls on the table.

Jousts

Calling a Joust will affect your teammate as well as your rivals. Jousts operate in the normal manner in Tetrarchy.

Special Banquet Card Power

This is the most significant addition to Tetrarchy.

When you play a Banquet card as an Action on your turn... you can either draw 2 cards, in the normal fashion, or you can offer that ability to your teammate instead!

If your teammate accepts then they immediately draw 2 cards into their Hand from their Earl deck, even though it is not their turn.

Gameplay notes:

Tetrarchy is a faster and arguably more exciting way to play *Ortus Regni* in a team format, compared to the deeper complexity of *Two-Headed Earl*.

Teammates can discuss and plan anything they want without restriction. Teammates can even show each other their Hands. But remember that you are in command of your own Earldom, and your honor is at stake if you are the first to fall; so be your own Earl!

It can be quite fun to sit next to your teammate and face rivals side-by-side. Watching their struggle “next door”. As you face off against your own rival. Your fates are linked. Your struggles are one, yet distinct.

Do not underestimate the features of the game that interlink these two Duels. They may at first seem indirect and subtle, but they can make a real difference.

The most obvious power is the ability to suddenly put 2 new cards into your teammate’s Hand - on your turn - by playing a Banquet card, and offering that feast to them. This can be very welcome and powerful in many tight situations. It is not unreasonable to always include two or three Banquets in your deck to access this ability.

The Vikings should not be ignored entirely. They are weaker in this format, because their magic number is 3... and they will also be delayed by combat from both duels. But they will often arrive, and being able to turn them on your team’s weakest rival is ideal.

The King card and the Cathedral can also both come into play. Better that you own them than the other team! Of course, you do not want to compete with your teammate for King, but either one of you can compete for it with the other side. And the Church Decides power is table wide.

Jousts, as always, are a little trickier to manage well. But keep in mind that if both you and your teammate have Champions, and the other side has only lesser cards, then your odds of winning are that much higher.

As games of Tetrarchy develop one duel or the other will appear to be the decisive one. That is, the side of the match-up where Earls look most likely to fall. In this scenario all the subtle ways that teammates might help, or intercede, become surprisingly important.

