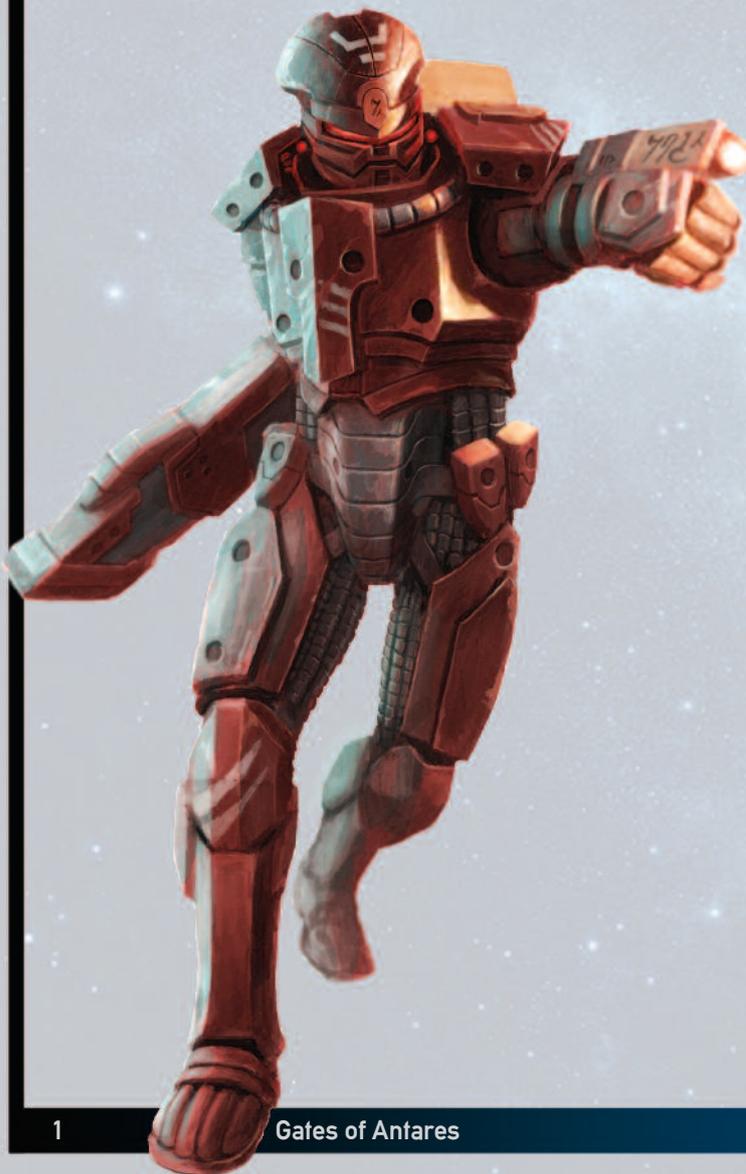


# Algoryn Castes

The Algoryn Prosperate is an enduring partnership of planets, a mutual trade and defence league that has successfully maintained its independence despite being surrounded by numerous and powerful enemies. Its continuing autonomy rests upon the ability of the Algoryn to defend their colonies, allied worlds, and outposts – its existence and its future lies within the hands of its highly effective military. Fortunately for the people of the Prosperate, of all the countless human descendants of Antarean space the inhabitants of Algorya are amongst its foremost and most deadly warriors.

Algoryn society is divided into five main castes, known as the legers, each of which plays a different although not necessarily less important role within society. The different castes rarely mix except where necessary. Marriage between castes is extremely rare, and the most renowned families have intermarried over many generations. Amongst the ruling Optimate leger, and also the most powerful families of the aristocratic Vector leger, this has resulted in the development of a culture of closely interwoven relationships and infinite subtleties of rank and distinction. These distinctions and attendant formalities of address, precedence and manner are baffling to an outsider but keenly observed by Algoryn of all ranks.



The five castes are the Optimate (highest), Vector, Founder, Servile, and Base (lowest) legers. Algoryn of the first three legers are all raised as warriors and play an important role within the Prosperate military. The final two legers play no role in the military, and even though some individuals may be important or respected in other ways, they are held to be of lower or inferior status as a result. Generally speaking, membership of a caste depends upon a family's clan, a sort of super-family or tribe known as a moch. Famous Optimate moch include the Janar, Rahq, Du'rel and

Ko're. Being born within a moch automatically determines which caste a person belongs to, but an individual can also be adopted by a family and then becomes a member of that moch and leger. Such adoptions are not common, but provide a means by which talented and ambitious members of the lower castes can rise above their humble birthright.

The Optimate leger provides the Prosperate with its strategic leaders both in terms of the military and society as a whole. The Algoryn make no distinction between military and broader political rank: their military leaders are also their political leaders. Although the Optimate gives the Prosperate its generals, governors, councillors and other powerful and influential decision makers, its members must be warriors first and foremost. The Algoryn value personal courage above all else, and a commitment to duty is ingrained throughout Algoryn society. Every person's life stands at the service of society as a whole. The members of the Optimate caste are expected to embody all of these uncompromising values. Successful command in action, bravery, and achievement in war are the means by which Algoryn of the Optimate caste achieve recognition and promotion.

The numerous Vector leger provides the traditional core of the Algoryn Armoured Infantry units, and as such much of the full-time military of the Prosperate. For this reason Armoured Infantry formations are also known as Vector units. All members of the caste capable of doing so serve in the military until such time as they are too aged or battle-damaged to continue. As warfare is continuous and has been so for hundreds of years the Vector leger fulfils a vital and honoured role and is regarded as a kind of aristocracy. The most respected amongst them aspire to the Optimate, a distinction that can be awarded to individuals by the High Council of the Prosperate, and takes the form of adoption by a sponsor. The greater part of the Algoryn permanent military consists of members of the Vector caste.

The Founder caste is the largest of all the five legers and also makes up the greater part of the population of the

An Algoryn Assault Squad bursts from the forest, mag repeaters and D-spinners blazing.



Prosperate. All members of the Founder leger are raised as warriors in the same way as those of the Vector leger, often alongside them. The Founder caste provides a huge reserve of trained troops that can be called upon when needed. Regardless of whatever their civilian role might be everyone is expected to train as part of their local militia, and all serve a term in the military, which might involve deployment to a frontline unit in a war zone. The name of the leger comes from the name of these militia units – Founder troops – that in turn derives from an ancient colonial tradition going back to the settlement of Algorya. Founder troops man the permanent defences of Prosperate planets. In war zones Founder units often form a second wave of troops behind the Armoured Infantry, occupying ground and serving as garrison units, freeing up AI units for mobile attacks. Often, losses amongst the AI results in troops from experienced Founder units being absorbed into the Armoured Infantry, especially during prolonged campaigns where Founder units may be deployed for many years at a time.

The Servile leger has no formal military role within Algoryn society and its members fulfil what are regarded as relatively safe, menial or civil functions. The members of this caste provide all the specialist services that enable Algoryn society

to function, including much of the basis for manufacture and research. Members of this caste can be important and influential individuals despite their relatively low standing. Some of Algorya's most successful scientists have come from the Servile leger, but as part of a society that places martial duty above intellectual achievement even the greatest minds are regarded as mere functionaries. Their duty is to serve behind the scenes, and it is a duty members of the leger undertake with all the loyalty and conviction of the other castes.

The Base caste is often not even regarded as a leger at all – its members are outcastes with very much reduced citizen's rights, individuals and families shunned by other Algoryn, homeless wanderers forced to eke out a living on the edges of Prosperate society. They include criminals, cowards, traitors and often their descendants – people who have been disinherited by their family or moch. Famously, in ancient times during the Erban War, the entire Optimate moch of Ma'req was cast from their leger. Ever since they have lived as spaceborne wanderers, traders and salvagers, plying the Prosperate routes and surrounding planets. They call themselves the Freeborn of Ma'req, though there is little trust between them and the Vardari or Prosperate.

