The Rules for Inventing

There will be moments in the game when creative players will wish to come up with "better" (read, more modern) ways of doing things in the game that they feel would make for a more enjoyable game experience for them. Concepts such as the mass-production of fire-arms or black-powder inclusive casings for bullets are fine examples of things that a player may want to do because the way it's done on Dárdünah currently seems so "limited, ineffective, and old-fashioned". It's very important for a GM to consider the cultural ramifications that such revolutionary inventions might make to the societies of Dárdünah, and whether such a development would make sense under the current social/religious/political climate in the game campaign, or if the players' desire to do it is more based on their own scope of knowledge as opposed the their characters' more limited range of understanding. Essentially, if it doesn't make sense for the invention they desire to fit well within the GM's campaign, and if it seems as if the characters who would be doing the inventing wouldn't have such an inspiration based on THEIR own life experiences and education (as opposed to the player's), then a wise GM should probably explain to the players involved that due to these reasons the GM will not be allowing such an invention to be made.

However, creativity should never be stymied, and if the GM feels that a particular invention concept is appropriately inspired and might make a good addition to the game environment, feel free to allow the inventive player to attempt to follow the path of the many other creative revolutionaries who have shaped the lives of the jánah during their thousands of years of development. Such inventions can be anything from a revolutionary use of a crystal's energy, to a totally new type of special weapon, a newly developed martial style, and even a brand-new magical ritual. Below we present a potential system of rules to deal with such invention attempts, and the general expenditures, by the player, of time and Story Points necessary to bring such an idea to life within the game.

STEP 1 – Discuss and Lay Out the Invention Idea

This initial step is where the player sits down with the GM and discusses an idea for an invention. It is here that the GM will decide whether or not the invention is one that they will allow to be part of the game experience. The player should understand if the GM decides not to allow the invention, since this determination is intended to maintain the balance and fiction of the overall campaign. If, however, the invention idea is a hit, then the discussion should begin concerning what must fictionally happen in the game to allow for this potential invention to progress, including such things as supplies needed and where they must be obtained from, where the experimentation required for the invention may need to be carried out, others who may need to be involved, etc.

STEP 2 - Choose the Inventive Elements

There may be several Skills, Talents, and raw Characteristics that will be utilized by the character attempting to invent. These various attributes are the Inventive Elements that are used to generate both the Invention Dice Pool the player will roll when their character makes the invention attempts (as there may need to be more than one roll) as well as the Odds Against Roll that will be made by the GM. The player will already have some idea as to the exact nature of the invention, and should therefore be able to determine (with the GM's okay) which of these attributes will be used as Inventive Elements, based on the skills needed to complete the task. Rolling and recording each of these attributes is merely the setup necessary for the invention process to begin.

- First choose which performance Skills (that let you "do" things, like Artistry, Bargain, Profession, etc.) would be most useful to the inventive process (you must choose at least one). Write these down for later reference, and roll each one individually to determine general success or failure of that skill. Record whether each one fully succeeded or not.
- Next choose which crafting Skills (that let you make things, like Alchemy, Armourer, Gunsmith, etc.) would be most useful to the inventive process (you must choose at least one). As before, list each of these, roll for them, and record whether they were successful or not.
- Do just the same with the Knowledge skills, choosing at least one (if not more), listing them, rolling them, and recording the results.
- Choose which Talents the character may possess whose dice might aid in the upcoming Invention Roll. List these Talents below the chosen Skills that have been rolled.
- Add the character's Wit plus their Perception Characteristics together and divide by two, rounding up the result. Roll this total as a single dice pool. Make note of the exact number of successes rolled for later reference.

STEP 3 – Tally the Cost and Determine the Invention Rolls

There are three different costs that must be determined here: Time, Monetary Expense, and Story Points. All of these MUST be paid regardless of the invention's success or failure, and should be accounted for before the Invention Rolls are made.

- Time Required = 8 days (1 Dárdüni week)

multiplied by the total number of Skills (Performance, Craft, and Knowledge) chosen for use in creating this invention. This is how long this invention will take to either succeed or fail, barring any further complications.

- Monetary Expense = 20 dalán (Dárdüni standard crystal coinage) multiplied by the total number of Skills (Performance, Craft, and Knowledge) chosen for use in creating this invention. This is how much money it costs the character (or their benefactor) in raw materials necessary for the invention process.
- Story Point Cost = 2 points, plus the total number of Talents being used, plus the total number of Skills (Performance, Craft, and Knowledge) chosen for use in creating this invention. This grand total is the cost in Story Points that must be paid to attempt the invention.

Now that the costs have been figured and accounted for, it is time to determine the dice pools for the Invention Roll and the Odds Against Roll. The Invention Roll will eventually rolled by the player against the GM's Odds Against Roll to determine the outcome of the inventive process.

- Invention Roll Dice Pool = 2 dice plus 1 additional die for each Skill roll made earlier that was a full success. To this dice pool may be added the dice for any of the appropriate Talents that were chosen earlier.
- Odds Against Dice Pool = The number of dice in the Invention Roll pool **MINUS** the number of successes earlier recorded for the Wit and Perception Characteristic roll.

STEP 4 – Rolling for the Invention and Determining Outcome

Now, finally, we get to see how it all turns out! At this point both the player and the GM will make their respective rolls, comparing them to one another to determine the results of the attempted invention.

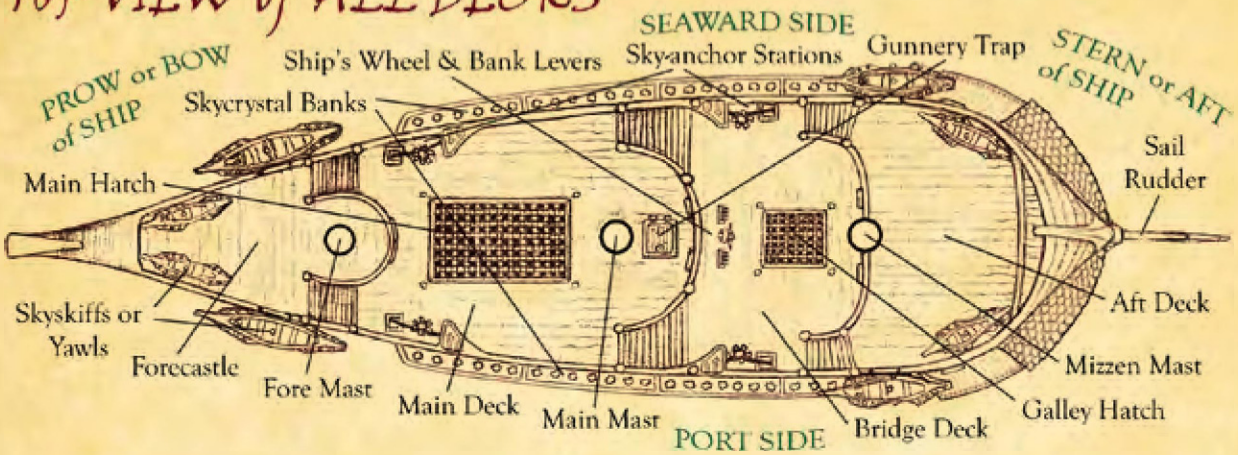
- First the player makes their Invention Roll, followed by the Odds Against Roll made by the GM. The resulting successes are then compared, with any success made by the GM negating any success rolled by the player. If no successes remain and the player has rolled any 1's, a Botch has occurred, resulting in total failure and shame, causing the experiment to be completely abandoned and leaving the inventor with a physical wound of some kind as testament to the disastrous results. If the roll merely fails to succeed (no successes remain, but there's no 1's either) then the attempted invention fails this time, the resources are wasted, but the player may still try again later. If the player achieves a partial success on the roll (only one success remains) then there has been a Setback of some kind and they must make their Invention Roll again after suffering some consequences (roll 1d6: 1-2 = 1d6 weeks delay, 3-4 = 1d6 x 20 more dalán required, 5-6 = character receives 3d6 levels of damage to current Stamina). If the player makes a full success (2 or more successes get through), then the invention was completely successful!
- The results of the invention attempt, one way or another, must now be taken into account as part of the campaign's fiction and current storyline, and should become a part of any interaction pertaining to the player's character for good or ill.

More About Skyships

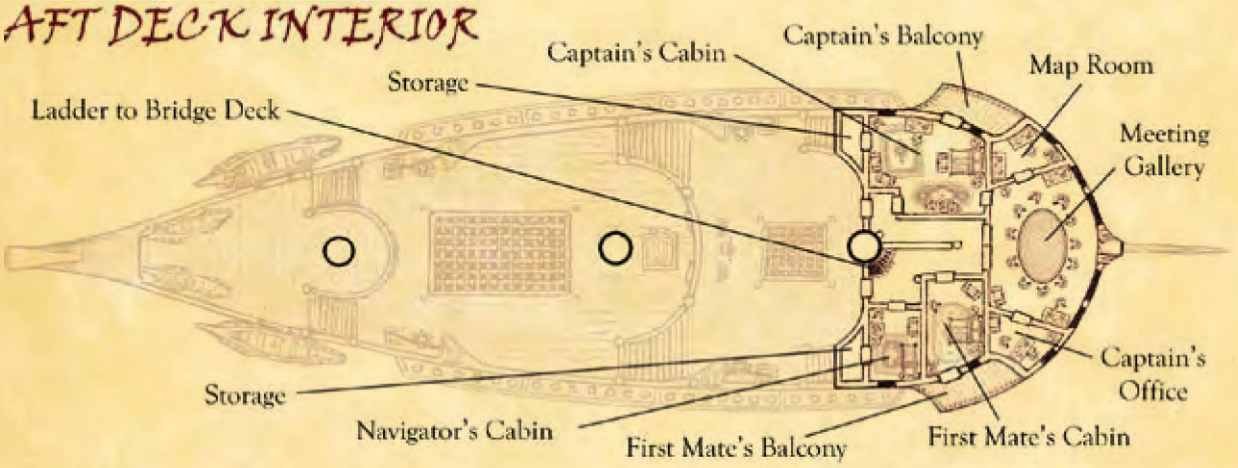
Within the campaigns that we have run during the creation of this game, skyships have always played a central role. Whether it was in service to a House and Line performing tasks that took the players on far-away journeys, or whether the campaign concerned the adventures of sky-faring corsairs and free-merchants plying their trade in the upper airs, the allure of flying ships was just too much to ignore. After all, who wouldn't want to sail through the clouds on a vessel held aloft by magical crystals? Because so much time was spent enjoying game sessions while aboard such wondrous craft we ended up generating a fair amount of questions and answers about more specific aspects of these ships, and as a result have compiled various tidbits of information that we will share with you here in the Appendix to enrich your experience with them as well. With as much interest as we have seen in them, rest assured that there will no doubt be more (and even better) presentations concerning these unique vessels soon to come.

You may have already noticed a section in the Combat chapter of the *Basic Compendium* pertaining to ship-to-ship combat, and this applies to skyships as well. In that section are listed several common varieties of ships found on Dárdünah. Among them is the Privateer Ship, which is actually meant to represent anything from an upper-scale sort of ship owned for lesser commerce and travel by Houses and Lines to the types of ships used by pirates and corsairs. This was the type of ship that we used in most of our campaigns, so we have chosen to include some rough schematics of the many decks of this type of ship, along with names of the various areas and features, in the images on the next two pages. These images may be useful as a good starting guide for larger or smaller vessels, but feel free to research other designs that might aid you in game-play...

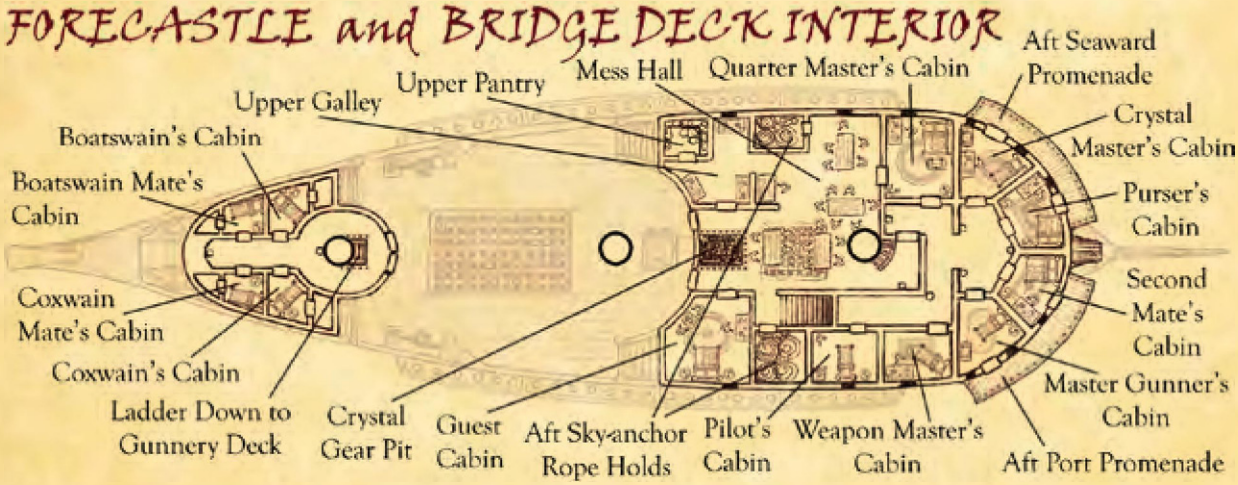
TOP VIEW of ALL DECKS



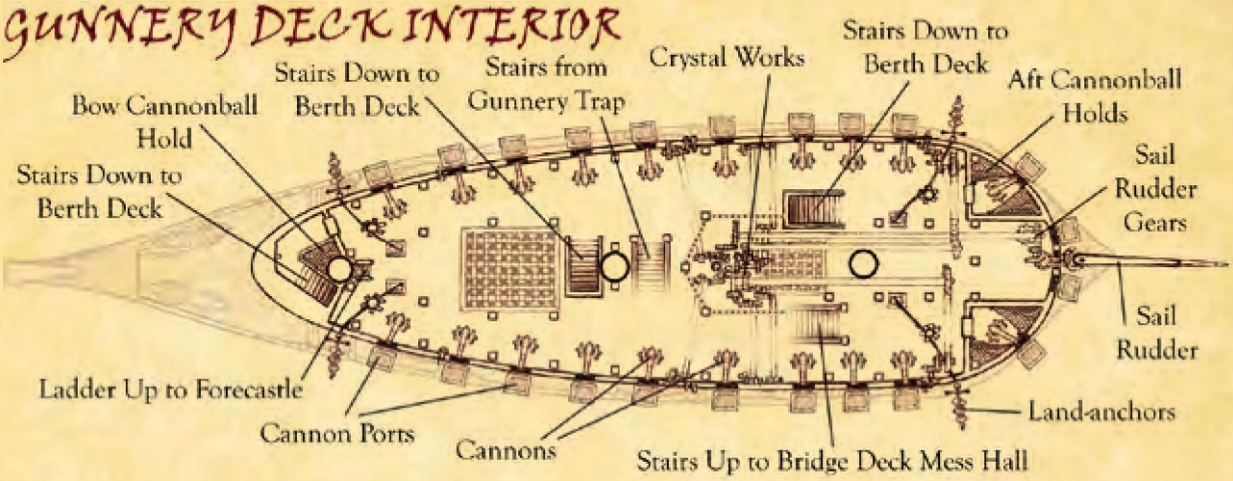
AFT DECK INTERIOR



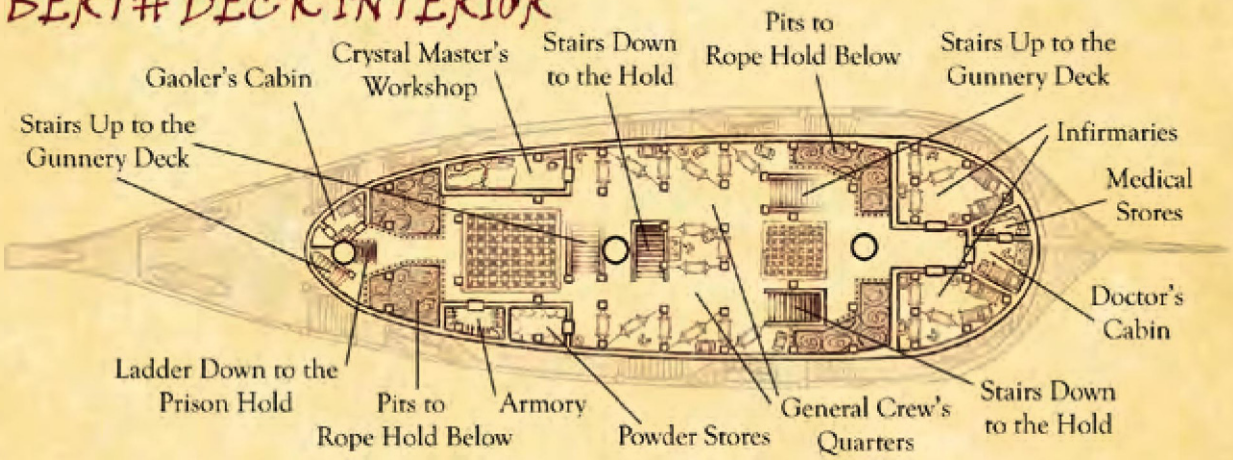
FORECASTLE and BRIDGE DECK INTERIOR



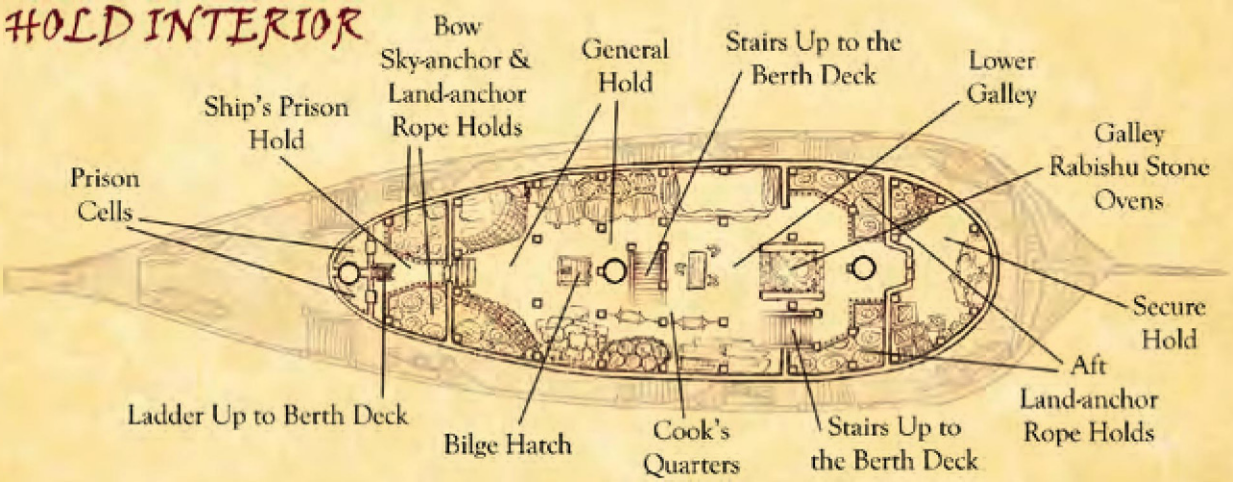
GUNNERY DECK INTERIOR



BERTH DECK INTERIOR



HOLD INTERIOR



How is it that the fabulous vessels fly, you may ask? What is it about the crystal along the sides of a ship that allow it to sail through the air? Those are both great questions. The crystals on the side of a ship (on both sides, actually) do indeed provide lift, and are called skycrystals (or sky crystals). On larger vessels there would be huge roll-top-desk-like sheaths that come out of the side of the ship in various places to cover them when necessary. These sheath covers are made of strips of amber (a plastic-like sap that comes from Dárdüni ambertrees that can be shaped and molded before it dries, and from which a variety of things are made, even weapons) that are applied to either sheets of canvas or thin wood. This amber is then infused with bahnif mineral dust, the powdered natural mineral out of which those crystals actually grew, which dampens their anti-gravity effect. This allows the crew to control the gain or loss of altitude at will by surrounding the crystals with the amber sheaths to a greater or lesser extent. On smaller ships (called sky skiffs) such as in the image to the right, silk or canvas "throw-overs" are kept rolled up on the inside walls, to which are sewn platelets of the same mineral-infused amber. Sailors would then manually cover the crystal banks with these to control aerial buoyancy as needed.

In addition to the control of altitude through covering and exposure of the banks of skycrystals, ships large and small are outfitted with various sizes and shapes of canvas and even durable silk sails and sail-rudders, some of which seem to protrude from skyships at odd angles and in strange formations. Unlike standard rudders, which depend upon their drag through the water to force a directional change, sail rudders catch the wind blowing on them from behind, serving to turn aerial ships in place as they continue to float in the same direction until their leaf-shaped hulls and pointed prows begin slicing through the air to enforce a new directional orientation and momentum.

To truly take full advantage of the strong directional wind-currents of Dárdünah, however, it is necessary for ships to either ascend or descend into one of the eight different general wind currents, each of which seem to flow in one of the eight different cardinal directions and sub-directions, or to use a complex system of kite-like sky anchors which are long silken ropes that are either weighted or sent aloft with a smaller skycrystal to catch the wind on another level so as to swiftly drag a vessel around to face a desired direction, during which members of the crew skillfully use the sails to tack into the wind and maneuver the ship.

When coming to rest in dock or having landed at some other location, nimble jánah are sent sliding down on large mooring ropes and land anchors that are employed to hold a skyship steady and in place. Mooring ropes are merely tied down to large loops set into tall, stilted sky-docks, while land anchors (large crystal or amber augers fastened to the ends of sturdy rope) are actually screwed into the ground by several jánah at once. More than a few times a quick getaway required the mooring ropes or land anchors to be cut free from the ship so that it could swiftly ascend to safety.

There will also be times when a skyship may desire or need to make a landing upon the water. When this is done, the silken sail rudders are furled and drawn up, and a simple wooden or amber rudder is brought forth from the hold and put in place at the ship's aft. Though most skyships are outfitted to handle such watery jaunts, they are not really made to do this for prolonged periods of time, as the lighter woods used for skyships can become stressed under the pressures of the water.