

# USING THE BIRKA PLATES

Version 1, April 5, 2002

As presented by Sgt. Talon, in service to House Darkyard and Legio Draconis,  
Glory to the Middle Kingdom and the Dragon Throne

## INTRODUCTION:

The following are basic instructions for the lacing of the Birka style lamellar plates to form body armour. Issues such as closing the sides and adding shoulders will be covered in Version 2 of this document.

These instructions are based on the working experience of the Author and are intended to assist others in getting started with their own Lamellar projects. Availability of materials discussed in this document may vary from region to region.

**ON A PERSONAL NOTE:** Most of this information was gained through research, experimentation, guess work and more than a little luck. Do not be afraid to try something different. As stated above, this document is to help others get started putting their plates together. I'm not claiming to be an expert, I'm just trying to help.

I hope you are as happy with your new armour as I was with mine.

Talon.

## BIRKA PLATE LAMELLAR LACING INSTRUCTIONS

*NOTE: Lacing is shown overlapping right to left assuming the primary weapon is used in the right hand. Left handed individuals should reverse the direction of overlap (going left to right).*

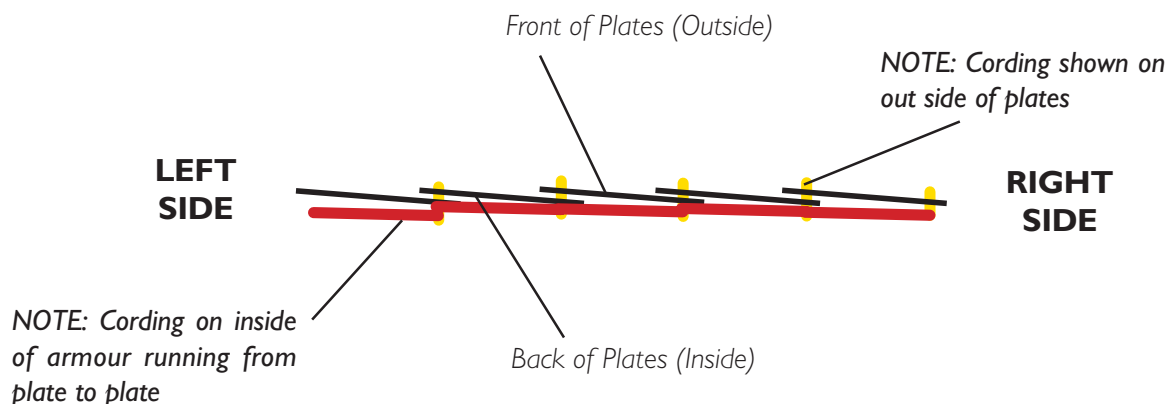
*NOTE: Cording used is a waxed cotton cord similar to dress shoe laces (approx 1/8-inch thick) and was purchased on a 100-yard roll for about \$25.00.*

*NOTE: Flexibility of the finished armour will depend on the tightness of the lacing.*

*NOTE: The tightness of the lacing should be consistent throughout the finished piece.*

## DIRECTION OF SIDE TO SIDE OVERLAP (FIGURE 1)

Incoming attacks to the weapon side of the body should slide along the armour. If the plates are overlapped towards the weapon side the edges of the plates will snag the incoming weapon. This applies no matter how the plates are overlapped top to bottom.



**FIGURE 1 - DIRECTION OF SIDE TO SIDE OVERLAP**

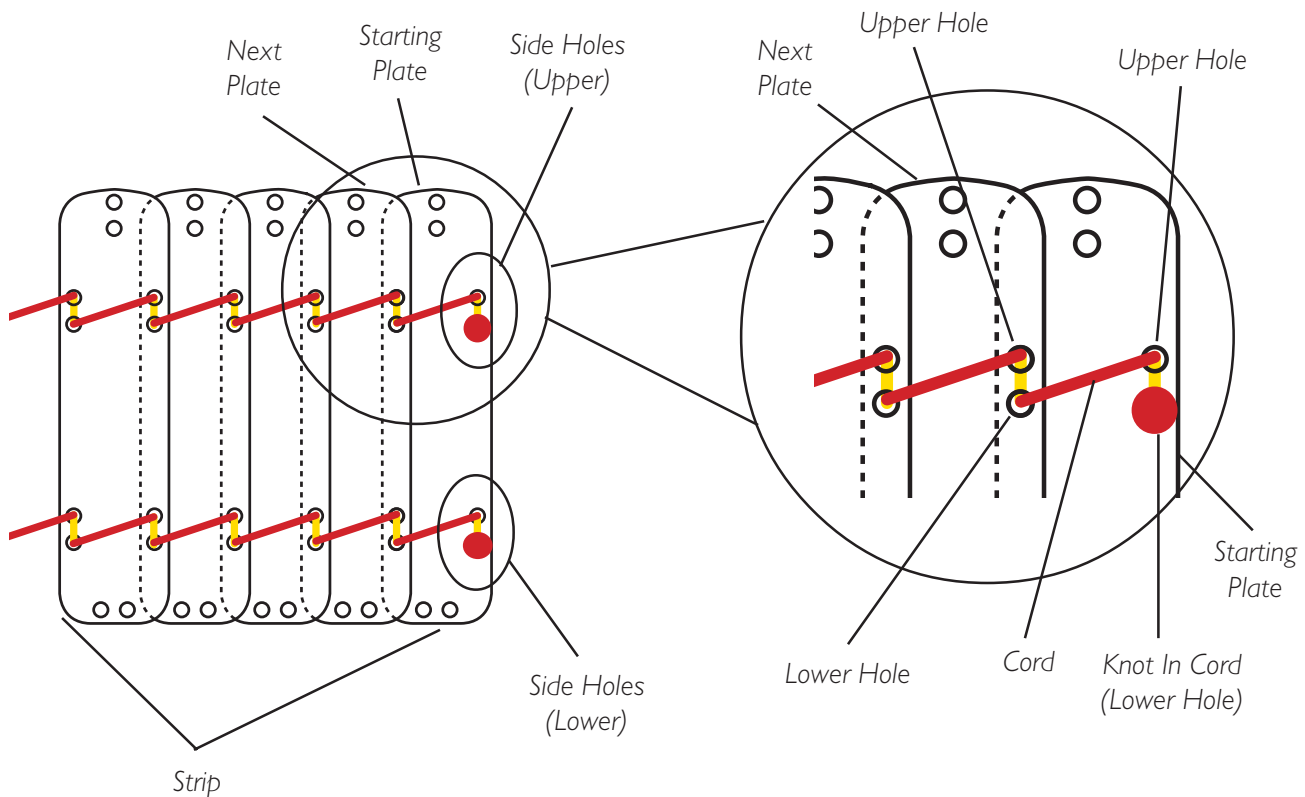
## LACING STRIPS OF PLATES (FIGURE 2)

*NOTE: Instructions are given as if looking at the plates from the back (inside of armour).*

1. Knot one end of cord.
2. From the back side of the inside plate, thread the cord through the lower side hole until the knot stops against the back of the starting plate.
3. Thread cord through the upper hole from the front of the plate.

*NOTE: depending on desired direction of overlap the next plate will be either in front or behind the starting plate. Refer to OVERLAPPING THE PLATES in these instructions.*

4. Align the four (4) side holes of the next plate with the four (4) side holes of the starting plate.
5. From the back of the plates, thread through the lower hole in both plates.
6. From the front of the plates, thread the cord through the upper hole in both plates.
7. Repeat STEPS 3-6 to add the remaining plates to strip until desired length is reached.
8. Repeat STEPS 1-6 to lace the lower set of side holes.



*NOTE: Cord shown color coded as follows:*

*RED DOT: Knot*

*YELLOW LINE: Cord from upper hole to lower hole on front of outside plate.*

*RED LINE: Cord from starting plate to next plate.*

**FIGURE 2 - LACING STRIPS OF PLATES**

## LACING STRIPS OF PLATES TOGETHER (FIGURE 3)

NOTE: Instructions are given as if looking at the plates from the back (inside of armour).

NOTE: Instructions given are for overlapping the strips Up from the bottom.

1. Knot one end of cord.
2. From the back side of the inside strip of plates, thread the cord through the bottom right hole until the knot stops against the back of the starting plate.
3. Locate top holes on the start plate of the outside strip.
4. From the back of the outside strip, thread cord through the upper hole of the start plate.
5. From the front of the outside strip, thread cord through the lower hole of the start plate.
6. From the front of the inside strip, thread cord through the left hole of the start plate.
7. From the back of the inside strip, thread cord through the right hole of the next plate.
8. From the back of the outside strip, thread cord through the upper hole of the next plate.
9. From the front of the outside strip, thread cord through the lower hole of the next plate.
10. From the front of the inside strip, thread cord through the left hole of the next plate.
11. Repeat Steps 7-10 to continue lacing the two (2) strips together.
12. Repeat this procedure to join additional strips together.

NOTE: Cord shown color coded as follows:

RED DOT: Knot

GREEN LINE: Cord from inside plate to outside plate.

YELLOW LINE: Cord from upper hole to lower hole on front of outside plate.

BLUE LINE: Cord from outside plate to inside plate.

RED LINE: Cord from starting plate to next plate.

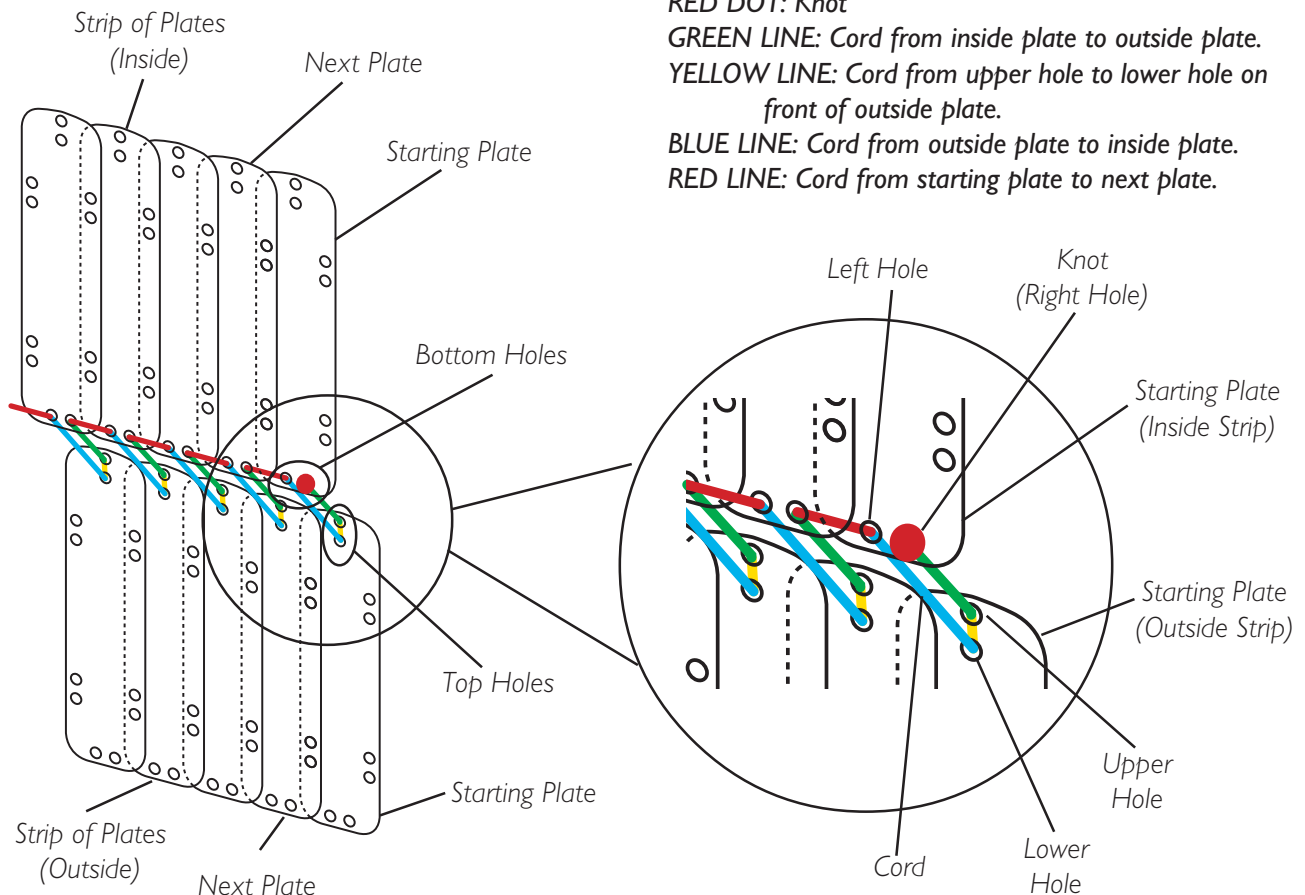
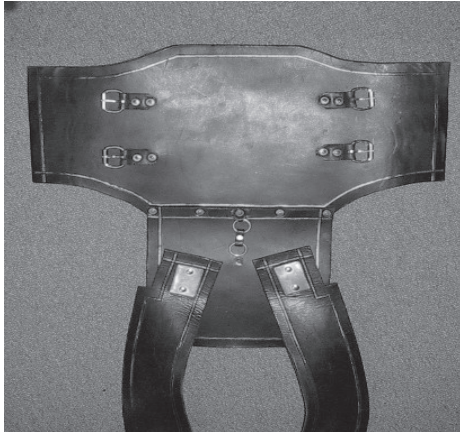


FIGURE - LACING STRIPS OF PLATES TOGETHER

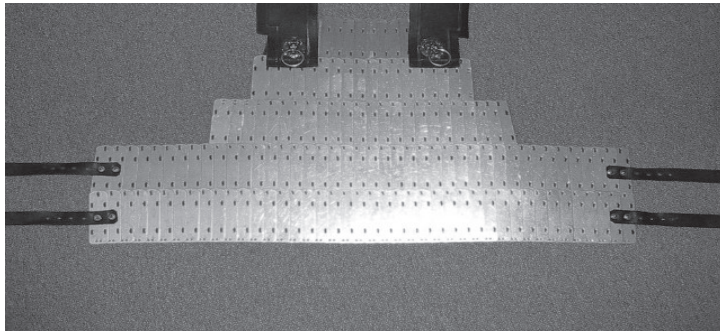
## EXAMPLE OF FINISHED ARMOUR

NOTE: example shown uses a leather back plate and shoulders

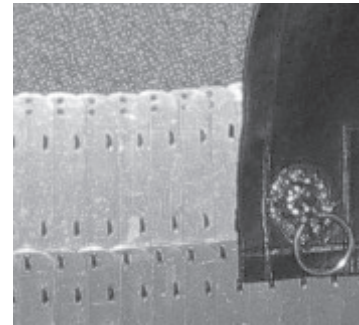
**BACK OF ARMOUR**



**SHOULDER MOUNTING  
TO BACK**



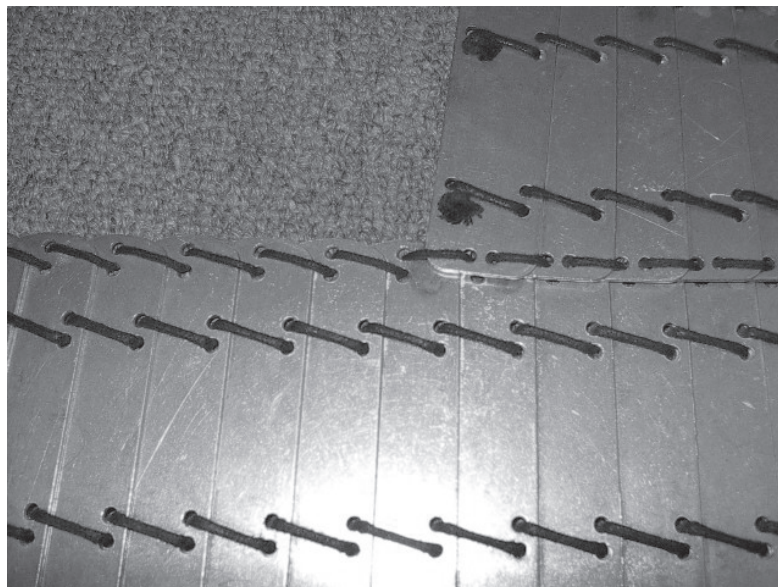
**FRONT OF ARMOUR**



**SHOULDER MOUNTING  
TO FRONT**

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**LACING DETAIL (INSIDE OF ARMOUR)**



## ARMOUR SIZING



*NOTE: This is how my armour fits. It stops above the belt line just above my waste allowing excellent side to side motion. It is worn a little loose so I can go from a crouched or knee fighting position to standing with out the armour riding up around my torso. This fit also allows for proper breathing during combat.*

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## CREDITS

Lord Ulfr the Forked Beard - Research and construction (bringer of the plates).

Sir Valharic Caligula Aurelius - Research, and construction,

Earl Sir Brannos O'Irongardail - Supplier of research material and technical assistance.

Lord Torvald of Scarlet Co. - Placing group order for plates.

Various Individuals on the Armour Archive ([armourarchive.org](http://armourarchive.org)) - Research and technical assistance (weather they knew it or not).

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Written by Robert F. Radcliffe April 5, 2002

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