**AESTHETIC AND FUNCTIONAL ROLE OF ACCESSORIES USED TO MANUFACTURE LEATHER GOODS**

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This paper presents the main metal accessories used in manufacturing leather goods. The metal accessories for leather goods have to be properly chosen taking into account their role and functional decoration, color, shape and size desired. Metal accessories have to ensure both good accessibility inside the product and the safety of stored objects. The accessories play an important role in hand or shoulder carrying, and allow strap length to be changed or removed as function of consumer options.

Key words: accessories, leather goods, design, manufacture

**INTRODUCTION**

The category of accessories for opening and closing products include: zippers, frames, “frog type” fasteners, “rotary type” fastener buttons and buckles.

The zippers are used in leather goods manufacturing for the following products: handbags, bags, travel bags, portfolios, briefcases, suitcases, bags, boxes and small leather products (wallet, card holders, pen holder).

The manufacture of leather goods uses the following types of zippers:
- Metal zippers - STAS 7942/1986;
- Injected plastic zippers - STAS 12531/1987;

The zippers are metal or plastic devices that are fixed on textile straps. They are manufactured in different sizes considering both the textile strap length (L) and teeth size (l'), which can be made of iron, brass, aluminum or plastic, Figure 1.

![Figure 1. Zipper components](image)

The tab (2) – pulled to move the slider – and the slider (3) – opens and closes the zipper – may present different structural shapes, Figure 2.

![Figure 2. Different shapes of the slider](image)
Spiral plastic zippers (STAS 9999/1992) have the textile tape (5) manufactured in various combinations of colors.

For this type of zipper the stringer is made of a polyamide monofilament or of polyester and the textile tapes are of cotton, synthetic yarns, cotton with synthetic yarns. The stops (1 and 6) are same as the natural color of metal and the other metal parts (tab, slider) are made of nickel, brass or are being colored the same as the textile tape.

Metal frames, used to open and to close beauty cases, wallets, handbags etc. may be semicircular or rectangular with rounded corners.

Frames can be provided with various ornaments, the opening and closing are accomplished through the lock, of various types of construction, Figure 3. “Frog type” fasteners are metal accessories used for opening and closing the following leather products: wallets, purses, folders, briefcases, satchels, suitcases, travel bags, Figure 4.

![Figure 3. Frames for bags and wallets](image)

Figure 4. Fasteners

Depending on product size, buckle’s shape and dimensions are very different, being provided with different mechanisms of fastening, with or without a key.

The “frog type” fasteners used for briefcases, satchels, suitcases must function flawlessly for securing the objects inside the products.

The “rotary type” fasteners are typically used to close the flap of handbags, having as well a decorative function, Figure 5.

![Figure 5. “Rotary type” fasteners](image)

Buttons, Figure 6, are used for fastening small leather goods and gloves. They are usually manufactured in different sizes, colors and hues.

Buttons have four parts, two for the top surface and two for the bottom one. Button’s count is represented as a fraction, where the numerator, in mm, is the stem height and the denominator is the stem diameter.
For women’s gloves there are used buttons 4/3 or 3/3, while those for men are 7/3 or 6/3. In order to fasten the flapped handbags and small leather goods hidden buttons are used, with or without a magnetic system of two pieces (top and bottom), Figure 6b.

Buckles are used for decoration or for closing some of leather goods such as: watch straps (Figure 7), belts (Figure 8.), fastening straps (handbags, travel bags, suitcases) and for closing the gloves’ straps especially for driving and sport gloves.

Shape and size of buckles are related to the size and destination of the leather good. Interior width is a key feature of the buckle, because it determines the strap or belt width. Buckles are manufactured in various shapes and sizes, of metal, bone, plastic or combinations of materials (metal and plastic).

Considering the shape, the buckles used for leather goods can be: rectangular, triangular and trapezoidal. The buckle’s needle can be applied on its bottom side which is usually narrower than the other sides or on a bridge located in the middle frame of the buckle.

Still there are some constructive types of buckles where this bridge is situated at a distance of 5-6 mm from the bottom side.

In the case of suit cases, the belts are fastened with metal buckles that have wheels on the upper side.

Metal buckles can have metal fastener and an end piece for strap’s protection, Figure 9.

There are also constructive types of buckles that consist of a mobile edge with clamping teeth attachment of different shapes.
Accessories for Sustaining Different Parts of the Leather Goods

The various components of a leather good need to be sustained by rings, handle pieces and shoulder straps, key accessories, metal rails, etc.

In order to strengthen the shoulder straps edges, different structural types of accessories can be used, Figure 10.

The loops are used to fix the handle edges at brief cases, suitcases, travel bags, bags, handbags, Figure 11. These items also have a decorative function. These accessories, according to their destination, have different shapes and sizes, being finished in chrome, zinc or coated with a protective layer.

Metal rails are used to increase resistance of the handles fixed on leather goods such as briefcases, flapped bags flap (Figure 12).

Suitcases frames are designed to offer a greater resistance to the suitcase and to maintain its shape.

Suitcases that are not rigid have resistance frames of steel, aluminum or hard plastic; these frames also increase the handle’s resistance at assembling.

The handle pieces are used for assembling the handle or the shoulder strap on some leather goods, such as bags, briefcases, Figure 13.
Also for some leather goods, accessories can be used to remove the shoulder strap, Figure 14.

Keys can be held by different constructive types of metal accessories, Figure 15.

Rivets (quick buttons) are used for fixing and assembling the various pieces of leather goods and have different sizes (3/7, 3/9, 7/9, 7/15), Figure 16.

Eyelets are usually used to reinforce the perforations of leather goods fastened with laces such as: backpacks, workout bags, covers, bags for easing the transition of the lace. Hinges are used at some travel products (suitcases) for fixing the cover by rivets.
Corner cramps are used to protect the angles of bags, backpacks and suitcases, Figure 17; they have different shapes and are made of steel. Corner cramps can be made from nickel or painted being applied by compressing or riveting.

![Figure 17. Corner cramps](image)

Protection tacks are assembled on the bottom of leather goods – such as bags, travel bags, suitcases – which are subject to abrasion and collision with different rigid surfaces that come in contact, Figure 18.

![Figure 18. Protection tracks](image)

These accessories can have a spherical head shape or truncated cone shaped with round edges. Protection tacks are fixed through bending; the fixing bar can be both straight and separated in two parts, and as well straight with screw thread.

**CONCLUSIONS**

In the manufacturing process of leather goods a special attention is given to the best choice of metal accessories, regarding:

- the main decorative and functional role;
- color, shape and dimensions in line with fashion trends for clothing and footwear and furthermore, the product’s destination;
- opening and closing system, as to allow a good accessibility and the safety of items stored inside the products;
- product’s accessibility as to be carried by hand or worn on the shoulder, allowing the user to remove the shoulder strap.

**REFERENCES**


