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(54) TURBOPUMP FOR A FLUID CIRCUIT, PARTICULARLY FOR A CLOSED CIRCUIT PARTICULARLY OF THE RANKINE CYCLE TYPE

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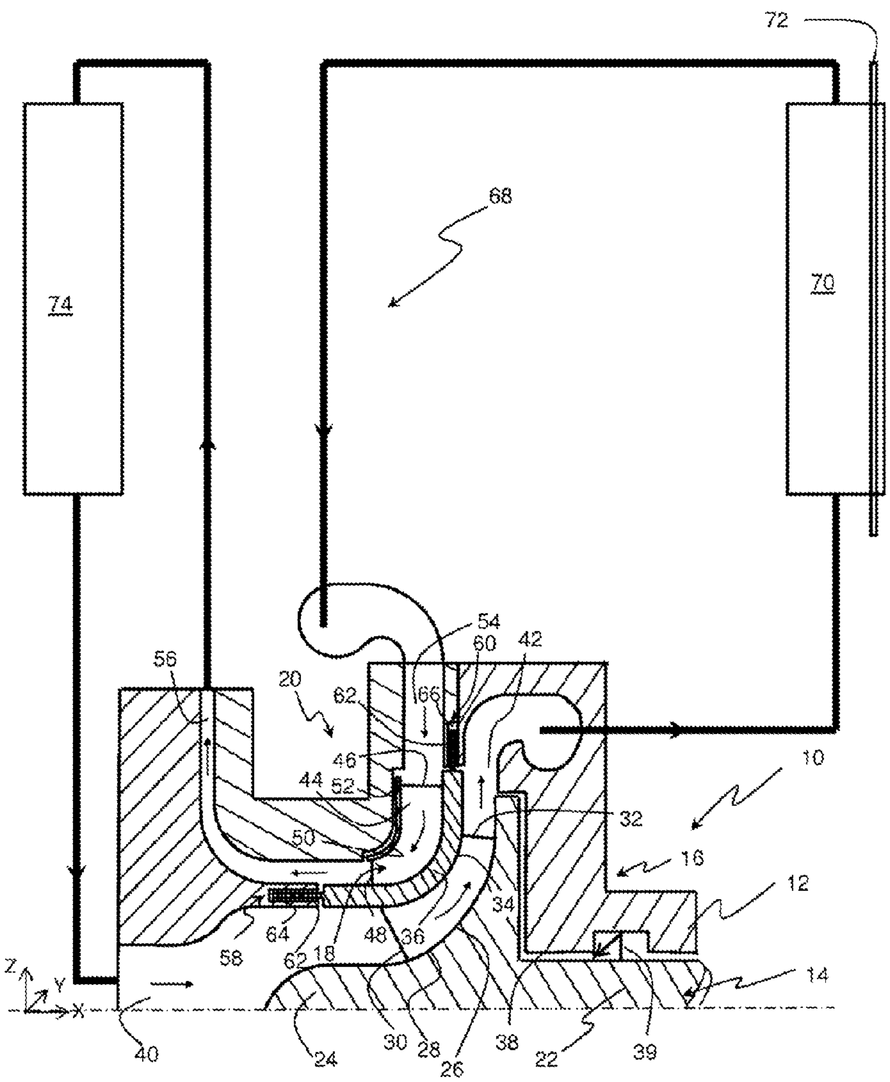
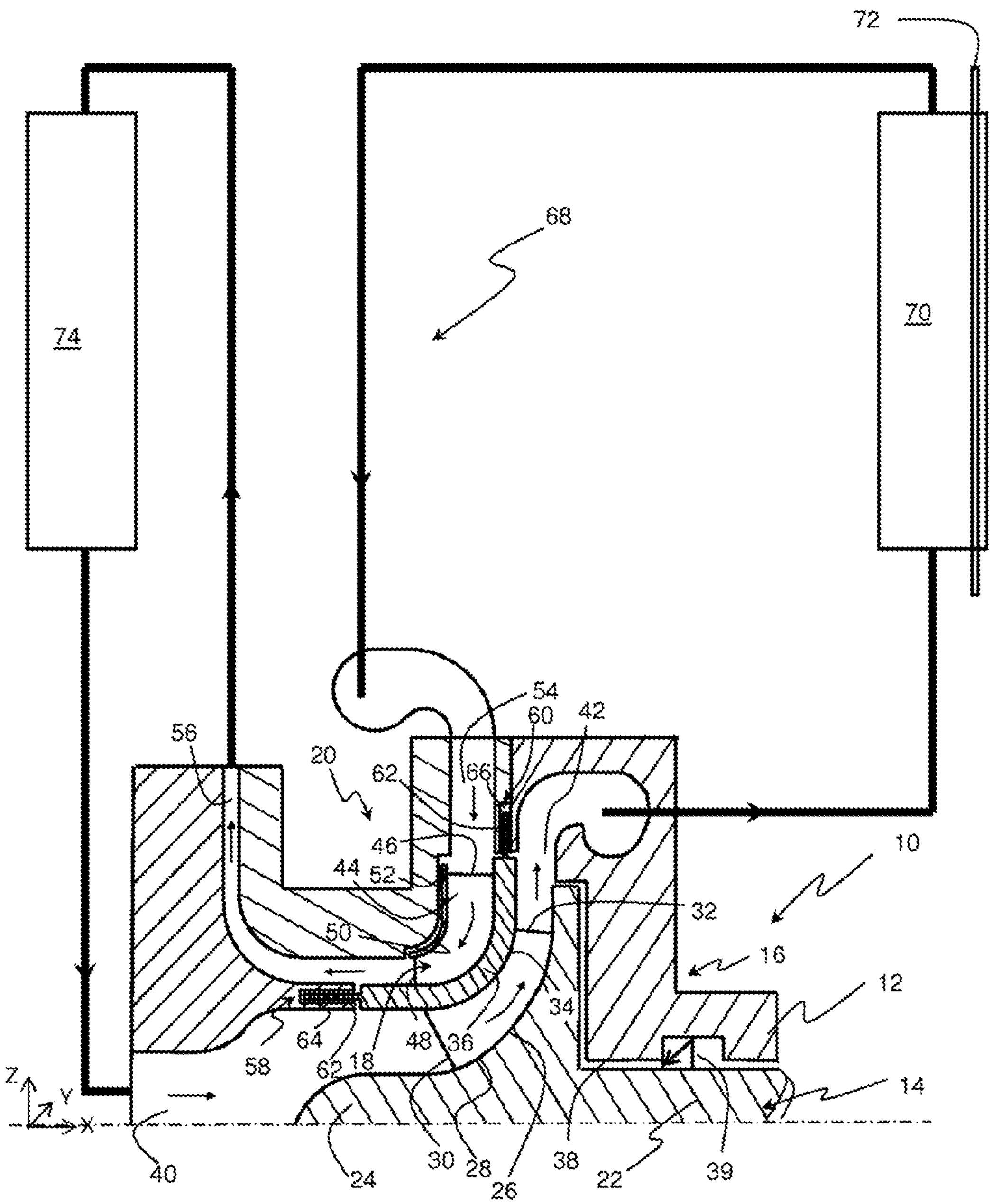
(57) **ABSTRACT**

The invention relates to a turbopump (**10**) comprising a stationary housing (**12**) comprising a pump (**16**) with a pump rotor (**14**) comprising pump vanes (**28**) and a turbine (**20**) housing a turbine rotor (**18**) provided with turbine vanes (**44**).

According to the invention, the turbopump comprises a turbine rotor (**18**) coaxially arranged around the rotor of the pump (**16**) in a plane perpendicular to said rotors.





Single figure

TURBOPUMP FOR A FLUID CIRCUIT, PARTICULARLY FOR A CLOSED CIRCUIT PARTICULARLY OF THE RANKINE CYCLE TYPE

[0001] The present invention relates to a turbopump used for a fluid circuit, notably for a closed circuit, particularly of the Rankine cycle type.

[0002] In general, a turbopump is a machine which comprises a turbine and a pump (or a compressor) so that some of the energy recuperated by the turbine drives the pump (or the compressor). In order to do this, the turbine and the pump (or the compressor) are mounted at the ends of a single rotation shaft.

[0003] This machine is fitted with lubricating bearings generally positioned on the central part of the rotation shaft. The turbine and the pump (or the compressor) are mounted at the ends of this rotation shaft and this requires, on the one hand, shafts that are relatively long and, on the other hand, a sealing system that allows the lubricating system to be separated from the effluents.

[0004] For the sake of simplicity in the remainder of the description the term "turbopump" will be used for a machine which could just as well comprise a turbine and a pump as a turbine and a compressor, and the term "pump" will also cover a pump just as well as it does a compressor.

[0005] As is better described in patent US **7 044 718**, reducing the length of the shaft and, therefore, the axial size of the turbopump, is already known.

[0006] In this document, the turbine and the pump are imbricated one inside the other so that the ducts of the turbine and those of the pump are also imbricated in one another about the rotation shaft, something which allows the axial length of the machine to be reduced appreciably.

[0007] The present invention proposes to reduce the length of the rotation shaft, and therefore the size of the turbopump, still further.

[0008] It also makes it possible to reduce the number of bearings and simplify the lubricating circuits.

[0009] To this end, the present invention relates to a turbopump comprising a fixed housing comprising a pump with a pump rotor comprising pump vanes and a turbine housing a turbine rotor bearing turbine vanes, characterized in that the turbopump comprises a turbine rotor positioned coaxially around the rotor of the pump in the one same plane perpendicular to the axis of said rotors.

[0010] The pump rotor may comprise radial vanes bearing a circumferential shroud at their tips.

[0011] The circumferential shroud may bear radial turbine rotor vanes arranged coaxially with and above the vanes of the pump rotor.

[0012] The radial tips of the turbine rotor vanes may bear a closed circumferential band substantially coaxial with the shroud.

[0013] The shroud may comprise means of sealing with the fixed housing.

[0014] The sealing means may comprise a set of labyrinth seals at each end of the shroud.

[0015] The other features and advantages of the invention will become apparent from reading the following description, given solely by way of nonlimiting illustration, and to which is appended the single figure which shows the turbopump according to the invention and its associated circuit.

[0016] In this figure, the turbopump has the feature of comprising a turbine which is positioned at the periphery of the pump. The turbine and the pump, and therefore the turbine and pump rotors, are thus both coplanar, because they are positioned in a plane perpendicular to the rotation shaft of the machine, and coaxial, because they both rotate about the same rotation axis. Specifically, the axis X of the orthonormal frame of reference (X, Y, Z) in the figure is at once the axis of the turbine rotor and the axis of the pump rotor. The turbine and pump rotors are in the same plane, parallel to the plane YZ of the orthonormal frame of reference (X, Y, Z), the plane YZ of the frame of reference being orthogonal to the axis X.

[0017] The turbopump **10** comprises a fixed housing **12** which houses the rotating part **14** of a pump **16** (or pump rotor) and the rotating part **18** of a turbine **20** (or turbine rotor).

[0018] The pump rotor comprises a cylindrical shaft **22** connected at one end to a hub **24** of substantially frustoconical (truncated conical) shape having a concave circumferential wall **26**. This wall bears a multitude of vanes **28** projecting radially from the wall and evenly spaced around the external periphery of this wall. The vanes comprise a leading edge **30** some distance from the free end of the hub **24**, a trailing edge **32** some distance from the base of the frustoconical (truncated conical) hub **24**, and a radial exterior tip **34** with a curvature substantially equal to that of the concave wall **26**.

[0019] As can best be seen in the figure, a curved circumferential shroud **36** is fitted, advantageously by shrink-fitting, over the radial tips **34** of the vanes notably in order to reduce flow losses.

[0020] This pump rotor is placed in the fixed housing **12** which comprises an axial bearing **38** to accept the shaft **22** of the pump rotor, a sealing system **39** associated with the bearing **38**, an axial inlet **40** for a fluid facing the hub **24** and which is coaxial with the bearing, being positioned upstream of the vanes, and a radial fluid outlet **42** which is in communication with the downstream part of these vanes.

[0021] This outlet **42** is advantageously volute shaped so as to guide the fluid toward the equipment it is to supply.

[0022] The pump thus comprises the shaft **22**, the hub **24** with the concave wall **26**, the vanes **28**, the shroud **36** and a portion of the fixed housing with the bearing **38**, the fluid inlet **40** and the fluid outlet **42**.

[0023] The shroud **36**, on the opposite face to the shroud that bears the vanes **28** of the pump, bears a multitude of vanes **44** projecting radially and uniformly spaced on the exterior periphery of this shroud. These vanes constitute the vanes of the turbine and are coaxial with, and substantially in the same radial plane as, the vanes of the pump. The vanes of the turbine comprise a leading edge **46**, a trailing edge **48**, and a radial exterior tip **50** with a curvature substantially identical to that of the shroud.

[0024] In a similar way to the shroud of the vanes of the pump, a curved circumferential closed band **52** may be positioned, advantageously by shrink-fitting, over the radial exterior tips **50** of the turbine vanes **44**, being coaxial with the shroud of the vanes of the pump.

[0025] The turbine rotor is thus formed by the shroud **36**, the turbine vanes **44** and possibly the band **52** of the turbine vanes, being mounted on the peripheral part of the rotor of the pump and thus forming an integral part of this pump rotor.

[0026] This turbine rotor is positioned inside the fixed housing **12** which comprises a fluid inlet **54**, advantageously in the shape of a volute, facing the leading edge **46**, turbine vanes **44** and a fluid outlet **56** facing the trailing edge **48** of these turbine vanes.

[0027] This configuration allows the compressor to be driven directly by the turbine via the vanes of the turbine and the shroud.

[0028] The force exerted by the fluid on the vanes of the turbine, combined with a large radius around the rotor of the pump, contributes to providing a greater deal of work than would be necessary to drive the compressor.

[0029] According to one embodiment, the turbine can operate without an electrical power supply, notably without an electric motor. It is therefore driven solely by the fluid.

[0030] Likewise, for this embodiment, it is possible for the pump not to be driven by an electrical power supply. It therefore requires no electric motor and is driven solely by the turbine.

[0031] Thus, residual work is available on the shaft of the machine to drive any mechanical or electrical device, such as an alternator/generator for example. Thus, the system uses no electrical power supply to operate it but rather allows a quantity of energy to be recuperated in the form of electric energy.

[0032] It is also necessary to ensure sealing between the shroud and the housing and this is done using sealing means positioned on the free ends of this shroud which separates the turbine from the pump.

[0033] To do this, these sealing means may be a set of labyrinth seals **58**, **60** with, as illustrated by way of example in the figure, a leaf **62** formed at each end of the shroud and penetrating grooves **64**, **66**. One **66** of the grooves is positioned between the inlet **54** of the turbine and the outlet **42** of the pump, and the other **64** of the grooves is situated between the inlet **40** of the pump and the outlet **56** of the turbine.

[0034] Sealing is improved by ensuring, on the one hand, equal pressures between the outlet of the pump **42** and the inlet of the turbine **54** (on the high-pressure side) and, on the other hand, equal pressures between the inlet of the pump **40** and the outlet of the turbine **56** (on the low-pressure side).

[0035] The turbopump as described hereinabove may be used in numerous fields, such as the petroleum, aeronautical, automotive, etc. fields.

[0036] This turbopump is more particularly suited to applications involving a closed circuit, particularly a circuit **68** of the Rankine cycle type, as illustrated in the single figure.

[0037] This closed Rankine cycle circuit is advantageously of the ORC (Organic Rankine Cycle) type and uses an organic working fluid or mixtures of organic fluids such as butane, ethanol, hydrofluorocarbons.

[0038] Of course the closed circuit may also operate with a fluid such as ammonia, water, carbon dioxide, etc.

[0039] Thus, the outlet **42** of the pump is connected to a heat exchanger **70**, termed evaporator, through which the working fluid compressed by the pump passes and by virtue of which the working fluid re-emerges from this evaporator in the form of a compressed vapor.

[0040] This evaporator also has passing through it a hot source **72** in liquid or gaseous form, so that it can release its heat to the working fluid. This hot source makes it possible to vaporize the fluid, and may come from varying hot sources, such as a coolant from a combustion engine, from an industrial process, from a furnace, hot gases resulting from combustion (flue gases of an industrial process, from a boiler, exhaust gases from a turbine, etc.), from a flow of heat derived from thermal solar collectors, etc.

[0041] The outlet of the evaporator is connected to the inlet **54** of the turbine **20** so as to admit the working fluid thereinto in the form of a high-pressure compressed vapor, this fluid re-emerging via the outlet **56** of this turbine in the form of low-pressure expanded vapor.

[0042] The outlet **56** of the turbine is connected to a cooling exchanger **74**, or condenser, which allows the expanded low-pressure vapor that it receives to be converted into a low-pressure liquid fluid. This condenser is swept by a cold source, generally a flow of ambient air or of cooling water, so as to cool the expanded vapor so that it condenses and is converted into a liquid.

[0043] Of course, the various elements of the circuit are connected together by fluid circulation pipes that allow them to be connected in succession.

1) A turbopump comprising a fixed housing containing a pump with a pump rotor comprising pump vanes and a turbine housing a turbine rotor bearing turbine vanes, wherein the turbopump comprises a turbine rotor positioned coaxially around the rotor of the pump in the same plane perpendicular to the axis of the rotors.

2) The turbopump as claimed in claim **1**, wherein the pump rotor comprises radial vanes bearing a circumferential shroud at their radial tips.

3) The turbopump as claimed in claim **2**, wherein the circumferential shroud bears radial turbine rotor vanes arranged coaxially with and above the vanes of the pump rotor.

4) The turbopump as claimed in claim **2**, wherein the radial tips of the turbine rotor vanes bear a closed circumferential band substantially coaxial with the shroud.

5) The turbopump as claimed in claim **1**, wherein the shroud comprises means of sealing with the fixed housing.

6) The turbopump as claimed in claim **5**, wherein in that the sealing means comprise a set of labyrinth seals positioned at each end of the shroud.

7) An application of a turbopump as claimed in claim **1** to a closed circuit, notably of the Rankine or ORC (Organic Rankine Cycle) type.

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