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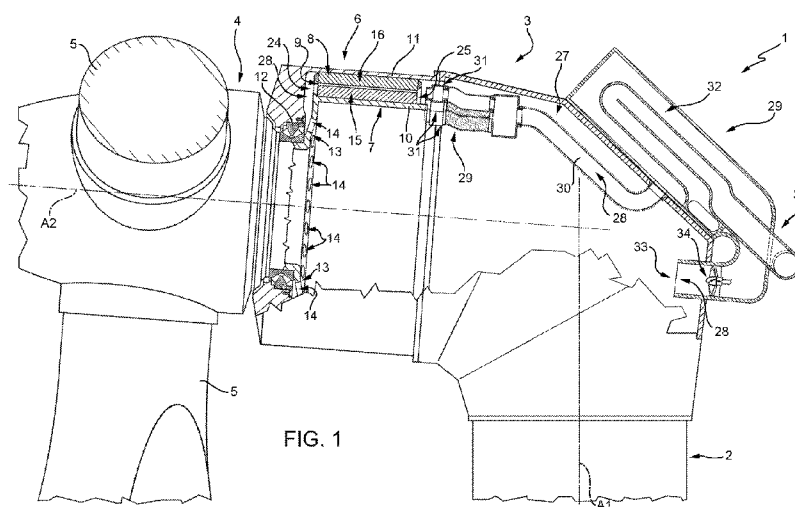


FIG. 1

(57) Abstract: A fluid-cooled wind turbine (1) has at least one electric machine (6; 206), in turn having a stator (8; 208) with a stator supporting structure (11; 211) and a plurality of active stator sectors (16) supported by the stator supporting structure (11; 211), and a rotor (7; 207) which rotates about an axis of rotation (A2) and has a rotor supporting structure (10; 210) and a plurality of active rotor sectors (15) supported by the rotor supporting structure (10; 210); and a cooling system (27; 127; 227) having a cooling circuit (28; 128; 128, 228) extending partly along a plurality of through channels (9; 19; 9, 19, 209, 19) adjacent to at least the active rotor sectors (15) or the active stator sectors (16).

FLUID-COOLED WIND TURBINE

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to a fluid-cooled wind turbine.

More specifically, the present invention relates to a wind turbine comprising at least one electric machine, in turn comprising a stator comprising a stator supporting structure and a plurality of active stator sectors supported by the stator supporting structure, and a rotor which rotates about an axis of rotation and has a rotor supporting structure and a plurality of active rotor sectors supported by the rotor supporting structure; and a cooling system comprising a cooling circuit, in which a cooling fluid, preferably air, circulates.

BACKGROUND ART

Wind turbines of the above type are described in EP 2,136,077; WO 2010/069954; EP 1525396; CA 2379161, and US 2006/0145484.

Known cooling systems do not always effectively cool the electric machine when it is operated in particularly critical areas.

OBJECT OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of the present invention to provide a highly effectively fluid-cooled wind turbine.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a straightforward, low-cost fluid-cooled wind turbine.

According to the present invention, there is provided a fluid-cooled wind turbine comprising at least one electric machine, in turn comprising a stator comprising a stator supporting structure and a plurality of active stator sectors supported by the stator supporting structure, and a rotor which rotates about an axis of rotation and has a rotor supporting structure and a plurality of active rotor sectors supported by the rotor supporting structure; and a cooling system comprising a cooling circuit extending partly along a plurality of through channels adjacent to at least the active rotor sectors or the active stator sectors.

According to the present invention, the plurality of active rotor sectors are in direct with, and cooled by, a dedicated stream of cooling fluid.

In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the plurality of through channels comprise an annular through channel extending about the axis of rotation and adjacent to the active rotor sectors and active stator sectors.

In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the plurality of through channels comprise a plurality of straight through channels, each adjacent to a respective

active rotor sector.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

A number of non-limiting embodiments of the present invention will be described by way of example with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which :

Figure 1 shows a partly sectioned side view, with parts removed for clarity, of a wind turbine in accordance with the present invention;

Figure 2 shows a larger-scale, partly sectioned front view, with parts removed for clarity, of a detail of the Figure 1 wind turbine;

Figure 3 shows a larger-scale, partly sectioned front view, with parts removed for clarity, of a detail in Figure 2;

Figure 4 shows a larger-scale, partly sectioned front view, with parts removed for clarity, of a detail in Figure 2;

Figure 5 shows a partly sectioned front view, with parts removed for clarity, of a detail of an alternative embodiment of a wind turbine in accordance with the present invention;

Figure 6 shows a partly sectioned front view, with parts removed for clarity, of a detail of another alternative embodiment of a wind turbine in accordance with the present invention;

Figure 7 shows a partly sectioned front view, with

parts removed for clarity, of a detail of another alternative embodiment of a wind turbine in accordance with the present invention;

Figure 8 shows a partly sectioned front view, with parts removed for clarity, of a detail of another alternative embodiment of a wind turbine in accordance with the present invention;

Figure 9 shows a view in perspective, with parts removed for clarity, of a detail of the Figure 1 wind turbine;

Figure 10 shows a partly sectioned side view, with parts removed for clarity, of another embodiment of a wind turbine in accordance with the present invention;

Figure 11 shows a partly sectioned side view, with parts removed for clarity, of another embodiment of a wind turbine in accordance with the present invention.

PREFERRED EMBODIMENT OF THE INVENTION

Number 1 in Figure 1 indicates as a whole a wind turbine comprising a pylon 2 (shown partly) extending along a vertical axis A1; a nacelle 3 fitted to the top end of pylon 2 and which rotates with respect to pylon 2 about axis A1; a hub 4 mounted to rotate with respect to nacelle 3 about an axis of rotation A2 crosswise to axis A1; three blades 5 (only two shown in Figure 1); and an electric machine 6.

Nacelle 3 comprises a hollow body fitted to the top

end of pylon 2 to rotate about axis A1, and supports electric machine 6, which comprises a rotor 7 and a stator 8 separated by an annular through channel 9. In the example shown, electric machine 6 is annular : rotor 7 is hollow and comprises a substantially cylindrical rotor supporting structure 10 extending about axis of rotation A2; and stator 8 comprises a substantially cylindrical stator supporting structure 11 extending about axis of rotation A2. Hub 4 is hollow and connected directly to rotor 7, i.e. to rotor supporting structure 10; and stator 8 is connected to the hollow body of nacelle 3. That is, stator supporting structure 11 is connected directly to the hollow body of nacelle 3, and communicates directly with the outside. In the example shown, stator 8 extends about rotor 7, and electric machine 6 is a synchronous, permanent magnet type. Hub 4 and rotor 7 are connected to each other and supported on a bearing 12, in turn fitted to nacelle 3.

Rotor supporting structure 10 is connected to hub 4, and has an annular sector 13, which extends crosswise to axis of rotation A2, close to bearing 12, and has a plurality of openings 14.

Nacelle 3 and hub 4 are designed so there is no or negligible exchange of air with the outside, i.e. inside, nacelle 3 and hub 4 define a closed area in which no outside air circulates.

In a variation not shown, the rotor extends about the stator.

As shown in Figures 1 and 2, rotor 7 comprises a plurality of active rotor sectors 15; and stator 8 comprises a plurality of active stator sectors 16 comprising stator windings not shown in the drawings. Active rotor sectors 15 and active stator sectors 16 are positioned facing and separated by annular through channel 9.

Each active rotor sector 15 comprises magnetized modules 17 and magnetic guides 18, and is fitted to rotor supporting structure 10 to form a straight through channel 19 between active rotor sector 15 and rotor supporting structure 10. Rotor supporting structure 10 is shown schematically in Figure 2 as one body, and may be defined by a single body (in one piece) with arms 20 for supporting magnetic guides 18, or by a hollow rotor cylinder with grippers bolted to it to support the magnetic guides.

As shown in Figure 2, each active rotor sector 15 comprises at least two magnetized modules 17 positioned contacting and perfectly facing one another, and stacked radially with respect to axis of rotation A2 (Figure 1), so as to form groups of magnetized modules 17 arranged successively, parallel to axis of rotation A2 (Figure 1), along the whole of active rotor sector 15. In other

words, each active rotor sector 15 comprises at least two rows of magnetized modules 17.

Magnetized modules 17 are gripped between two magnetic guides 18, each defined by respective packs of laminations.

More specifically, as shown in Figure 2, each straight through channel 19 is bounded at one side by a respective magnetized module 17 and respective pair of magnetic guides 18, at the other side by rotor supporting structure 10, and laterally by arms 20 of rotor supporting structure 10.

In an alternative embodiment shown in Figures 2 and 3, a portion of through channel 19 defined by rotor supporting structure 10 has a serrated profile (shown by dash lines) to increase the heat-exchange surface.

In another alternative embodiment shown in Figures 2 and 4, a portion of through channel 19 defined by rotor supporting structure 10 has fins (shown by dash lines) to increase the heat-exchange surface.

In an alternative embodiment shown in Figure 5, straight through channels 19 comprise intermediate through channels 21 formed between the rows of magnetized modules 17 and therefore parallel to axis of rotation A2. More specifically, magnetized modules 17 in each row are positioned contacting magnetized modules 17 in the other row, and are designed to form at least one

intermediate through channel 21.

In an alternative embodiment shown in Figure 6, magnetized modules 17 are not positioned contacting; magnetic guides 18 are designed to form seats for magnetized modules 17; and intermediate through channels 21 are defined between adjacent rows of magnetized modules 17.

In an alternative embodiment shown in Figure 7, electric machine 6 comprises a protector 22 facing stator 8 and contacting the row of magnetized modules 17 adjacent to stator 8; and a protector 23 facing rotor supporting structure 10 and contacting the row of magnetized modules 17 adjacent to rotor supporting structure 10.

In the alternative embodiment in Figure 8, magnetized modules 17 are designed to increase the heat exchange surface with the cooling fluid inside straight through channels 19 and annular through channel 9.

As shown in Figures 1 and 2, annular through channel 9 and straight through channels 19 extend parallel to axis of rotation A2, and are located between rotor supporting structure 10 and stator supporting structure 11, i.e. extend axially between two opposite ends 24 and 25.

Stator 8 comprises cooling fins 26 fixed to stator supporting structure 11, on the opposite side to active

stator sectors 16.

Wind turbine 1 comprises a cooling system 27 fitted to nacelle 3 and comprising a cooling circuit 28 (Figure 1) for cooling electric machine 6 with cooling fluid which, in the example shown in the drawings, is gaseous and, in particular, air.

As shown in Figures 1 and 2, cooling circuit 28 extends partly along annular through channel 9 and straight through channels 19 to effectively cool magnetized modules 17. In the example shown, the cooling fluid flows along straight through channels 19 and annular through channel 9 from cooling fluid inlet end 24 to cooling fluid outlet end 25 in a direction parallel to axis of rotation A2.

As shown in Figures 1 and 9, cooling system 27 comprises a cooling fluid suction assembly 29, which comprises pipes 30, and suction ports 31 positioned facing outlet end 25 to cover at least one angular sector and feed cooling fluid into annular through channel 9 and straight through channels 19. Cooling circuit 28 is a closed circuit, and extends partly along suction assembly 29. Suction assembly 29 comprises a heat exchanger 32 on the outer surface of nacelle 3 and connected to pipes 30 to receive hot air for cooling; a delivery port 33 for feeding cooled air into nacelle 3; and a fan 34 located between delivery port 33 and heat

exchanger 32 to increase cooled airflow from delivery port 33.

Suction assembly 29 comprises an outer circuit 35 connected to heat exchanger 32 and in which outside air circulates; and heat exchanger 32 cools the air inside nacelle 3 with the outside air from outer circuit 35.

Suction assembly 29 - i.e. pipes 30, suction ports 31, heat exchanger 32, delivery port 33, fan 34, and outer circuit 35 - is integral with nacelle 3.

Cooling circuit 28 extends partly, through openings 14, between delivery port 33 and cooling fluid inlet end 24. More specifically, cooling circuit 28 extends partly inside nacelle 3, and depends on the configuration of electric machine 6 and nacelle 3. That is, the low pressure produced by suction ports 31 inside annular through channel 9 and straight through channels 19 draws cooled air through openings 14 from delivery port 33 to inlet end 24 of straight through channels 19 and annular through channel 9.

In actual use, the cooling fluid cooled by heat exchanger 32 is drawn out of delivery port 33 by the low pressure produced by suction port 31 in annular through channel 9 and straight through channels 19, and flows through openings 14 to inlet end 24, from where it is drawn by suction port 31 along annular through channel 9 and straight through channels 19 to outlet end 25. As it

flows along annular through channel 9 and straight through channels 19, the cooling fluid withdraws heat from active rotor sectors 15, i.e. from magnetized modules 17, and from active stator sectors 16. And the hot cooling fluid flows along pipes 30 to heat exchanger 32, which cools by means of outer circuit 35.

The outside air flows through cooling fins 26, which increase the heat exchange surface between the air and stator supporting structure 11.

In the alternative embodiment shown in Figure 10, parts identical to those of the preceding wind turbine embodiment are indicated using the same reference numbers; heat exchanger 32, delivery port 33, fan 34, and outer circuit 35 of cooling system 27 are omitted; cooling system 27 is replaced by cooling system 127; cooling circuit 28 is replaced by cooling circuit 128; suction assembly 29 is replaced by suction assembly 129; and the cooling fluid is air.

Nacelle 3 and hub 4 are replaced by nacelle 103 and hub 104, both outwardly open.

More specifically, cooling system 127 is supported partly by hub 104 and partly by nacelle 103, is designed to air-cool electric machine 6, and, in particular, feeds cooling air, predominantly in a direction parallel to axis of rotation A2, between a feed opening 133 in hub 104, and an exhaust opening 136 in nacelle 103.

On the opposite side to hub 104, rotor 7 is closed by a panel 134 connected to the inner end of rotor supporting structure 10 and designed to prevent cooling airflow from hub 104 to exhaust opening 136 via the inside of rotor supporting structure 10.

Cooling system 127 comprises, in succession from feed opening 133 to exhaust opening 136, an inlet air filtration device 138; a ventilation device 139; and suction assembly 129 comprising suction ports 31, pipes 30, a panel 140, and a ventilation device 141.

Filtration device 138 is fitted to hub 104 at feed opening 133, and comprises a convex panel 142 located opposite feed opening 133 and having a convex face 143 facing outwards, and an oppositely convex annular edge 144; an annular panel 145 having a concave face 146 extending about edge 144 and facing convex panel 142; and an annular panel 147, which extends inside convex panel 142, and comprises a convex face 148 facing convex panel 142, and a concave face 149 facing hub 104.

Panel 142 is fitted to hub 104 by spacer arms 150, whereas panels 145 and 147 are fitted to hub 104 directly, about feed opening 133. Panels 142, 145, 147 guide the incoming air into hub 104, and are designed and arranged to channel the air inflow along a labyrinth path. Filtration device 138 thus prevents or at least reduces the amount of water, snow, or dirt entering hub

104 and nacelle 103.

Ventilation device 139 is housed inside hub 104, and comprises a powered fan 151; a guide 152 parallel to axis of rotation A2; and a slide 153 supporting fan 151, and which engages and slides along guide 152 in a direction parallel to axis of rotation A2.

Guide 152 comprises rails 154 arranged about and extending parallel to axis of rotation A2; and fan 151 serves to accelerate airflow in a parallel direction towards nacelle 103.

Fan 151 is movable along axis of rotation A2 to allow worker access, and also to set fan 151 to the best operating position.

Panel 140 is fitted to nacelle 103, comprises an opening 155 connected to pipes 30, and is positioned facing ventilation device 141 to guide airflow from suction ports 31 to ventilation device 141.

Ventilation device 141 comprises a fan 156, and brackets 157 for fixing fan 156 to nacelle 103, close to exhaust opening 136.

In actual use, nacelle 103 is oriented about axis A1 to position axis of rotation A2 in the wind direction, with blades 5 facing into the wind.

Cooling circuit 128 extends partly from feed opening 133 to inlet end 24 of straight through channels 19 and annular through channel 9, via air filtration

device 138, ventilation device 139, and opening 14.

In other words, the cooling air flows naturally along the labyrinth path inside feed opening 133, and into hub 104 and nacelle 103.

Cooling circuit 128 also extends partly from inlet end 24 to outlet end 25 of straight through channels 19 and annular through channel 9.

Cooling circuit 128 extends partly from outlet end 25 of straight through channels 19 and annular through channel 9 to exhaust opening 136 via suction ports 31, pipes 30, opening 155, and ventilation device 141.

The cooling air conducted into hub 104 and nacelle 103 is also assisted by fan 151, which serves to overcome any load losses in the cooling airflow, and to accelerate airflow inside hub 104 and nacelle 103.

In other words, the cooling air flowing inside hub 104 is drawn by ventilation device 141 into straight through channels 19 and annular through channel 9, thus cooling rotor 7. More specifically, after flowing through ventilation device 139, the cooling air flows through opening 14, along straight through channels 19 and annular through channel 9, through suction ports 31 into pipes 30, and along pipes 30 to opening 155 in panel 140, where it is drawn out by ventilation device 141 and expelled through exhaust opening 136.

In Figure 11, which shows an alternative embodiment

to the one in Figure 10, suction ports 31, pipes 30 and panel 140 are omitted; cooling system 127 is replaced by cooling system 227; suction assembly 129 is replaced by suction assembly 229; nacelle 103 is replaced by nacelle 203; and wind turbine 1 comprises an electric machine 206 comprising a rotor 207 and stator 208 separated by an annular through channel 209. In the example shown, the electric machine 206 is annular : rotor 207 is hollow and comprises a substantially cylindrical rotor supporting structure 210 extending about axis of rotation A2; and stator 208 comprises a substantially cylindrical stator supporting structure 211 extending about axis of rotation A2.

Nacelle 203 comprises a central member 213 in the form of a hollow cylinder.

Stators 8 and 208 are substantially coaxial, i.e. have substantially coincident axes of symmetry, are spaced apart, and are connected by central member 213, which, in the example shown, is interposed between stators 8 and 208. Rotors 7 and 207 are connected by a transmission assembly 258, which transfers rotation from rotor 7 to rotor 207 as shown in Figure 11.

Hub 104 is fixed directly to rotor 7 to transfer wind-induced rotation to rotor 7.

Central member 213 is fixed to pylon 2 to rotate about an axis crosswise to axis of rotation A2, to

position blades 5 into the wind.

Nacelle 203 comprises two annular collars 259, 260 positioned contacting respective stator supporting structures 11, 211, and which define the opposite ends of nacelle 203. Two annular collars 259, 260 are located at the opposite side of the nacelle 203.

Stators 8 and 208, central member 213, and annular collars 259 and 260 define the supporting structure of nacelle 203.

Rotor 207 is connected to collar 260 by a bearing 212 at the end of nacelle 203 adjacent to rotor 207.

Rotor 207 comprises a plurality of active rotor sectors 15; and stator 208 comprises active stator sectors 16 (only one shown in Figure 11) comprising stator windings not shown in the drawings. Active rotor sectors 15 and active stator sectors 16 are positioned facing and separated by annular through channel 209.

Each active rotor sector 15 comprises magnetized modules 17 and magnetic guides 18, and is fitted to rotor supporting structure 210 to form a straight through channel 19 between active rotor sector 15 and rotor supporting structure 10.

More specifically, each straight through channel 19 is bounded at one side by a respective magnetized module 17 and respective pair of magnetic guides 18, at the other side by rotor supporting structure 210, and

laterally by arms 20 of rotor supporting structure 210.

Rotor supporting structure 210 is shown schematically as one body in the Figure 11 embodiment, and may be defined by a single body (in one piece) with arms 20 for supporting magnetic guides 18, or by a hollow rotor cylinder with grippers bolted to it to support magnetic guides 18.

With reference to Figure 11, transmission assembly 258 is deformable to permit relative movement of electric machines 6 and 206.

More specifically, transmission assembly 258 is deformable to permit alignment adjustments and/or relative movement of rotors 7 and 207.

Transmission assembly 258 comprises an annular elastic joint 261; and a transmission shaft 262 comprising a hollow cylinder 263 connected to rotor 7 by elastic joint 261, and a hollow cylinder 264 connected at one end to hollow cylinder 263 by flanges, and at the other end to rotor 207.

Elastic joint 261 is deformable elastically to reduce stress transmitted to rotor 207 by movement of rotor 7 caused by stress transmitted from blades 5. Transmission shaft 262 has openings 265 in hollow cylinder 263 to allow cooling air into hollow cylinder 263, and which are large enough to allow worker access into transmission shaft 262.

Exhaust opening 136 is located at annular collar 260 on nacelle 203, on the opposite side to feed opening 133 and at rotor 207.

Cooling system 227 also comprises a truncated-cone-shaped baffle 266 with two annular ends. Baffle 266 is connected at the larger-diameter annular end to the end of stator 8 opposite hub 104, is connected at the smaller-diameter annular end to hollow cylinder 263, close to the flanges connecting it to hollow cylinder 264, and is designed to direct cooling air from outlet end 25 of straight through channels 19 and annular through channel 9 through openings 265 into hollow cylinder 263, i.e. defines a suction port. Cooling system 227 also comprises a truncated-cone-shaped baffle 267 located inside rotor 207, and which is connected at one end to hollow cylinder 264, and at the other end to annular collar 260, close to bearing 212. Central member 213 has cooling air inlet openings 268. And baffles 266, 267, transmission shaft 262, and ventilation device 141 are all functional parts of suction assembly 229.

Panel 134 of rotor 7 is located at transmission shaft 262 and positioned perpendicular to axis of rotation A2 to prevent cooling airflow from hub 104 to transmission shaft 262 via rotor supporting structure 10. And supporting structure 210 extends up to hollow cylinder 264 to form a closed area and prevent the

cooling air from openings 268 in central member 213 from flowing into rotor 207.

In this embodiment, cooling circuit 128 extends partly from outlet end 25 of straight through channels 19 and annular through channel 9 to exhaust opening 136 via baffle 266, transmission shaft 262, baffle 267, annular collar 260 and ventilation device 141. Cooling system 227 also comprises a cooling circuit 228, which extends partly from opening 268 in central member 213 to inlet ends 24 of straight through channels 19 and annular through channel 209 of electric machine 206, extends partly from inlet ends 24 to outlet ends 25 of straight through channels 19 and annular through channel 209 of rotor 207 of electric machine 206, and extends from outlet ends 25 of straight through channels 19 and annular through channel 209 of rotor 207 of electric machine 206 to exhaust opening 136.

Cooling system 227 cools rotors 7 and 207 by means of two cooling circuits 128, 228 traversed by two separate streams of cooling air. Rotor 7 is cooled by a first stream defined by the cooling air which flows through feed opening 133 into hub 104, flows through fan 151, and is diverted into straight through channels 19 and annular through channel 9 through openings 14 in rotor supporting structure 10. The cooling air flowing along straight through channels 19 and annular through

channel 9 heats up, and is diverted by baffle 266 through openings 265 into hollow cylinder 263; and the hot cooling air is drawn by fan 156 along hollow cylinder 264, through baffle 267 and out through exhaust opening 136. Rotor 207 is cooled by a second stream, which flows in through openings 268 in central member 213, is drawn by fan 156 towards straight through channels 19 and annular through channel 209 in electric machine 206, flows along straight through channels 19 and annular through channel 209 in electric machine 206 in a direction parallel to axis of rotation A2, and is drawn out by fan 156 through exhaust opening 136.

The present invention provides for effectively cooling rotors 7 and 207, and for eliminating the drawback of the known art, whereby rotor 207 is cooled by cooling air already used to cool rotor 7. By virtue of the present invention, the second stream of cooling air is therefore colder than in the known art.

The present invention obviously also extends to embodiments not described in detail herein, as well as equivalent embodiments within the protective scope of the accompanying Claims.

CLAIMS

1) A fluid-cooled wind turbine (1) comprising at least one electric machine (6; 206), in turn comprising a stator (8; 208) comprising a stator supporting structure (11; 211) and a plurality of active stator sectors (16) supported by the stator supporting structure (11; 211), and a rotor (7; 207) which rotates about an axis of rotation (A2) and has a rotor supporting structure (10; 210) and a plurality of active rotor sectors (15) supported by the rotor supporting structure (10; 210); and a cooling system (27; 127; 227) comprising a cooling circuit (28; 128; 128, 228) extending partly along a plurality of through channels (9, 19; 9, 19, 209, 19) adjacent to at least the active rotor sectors (15) or the active stator sectors (16).

2) A wind turbine as claimed in Claim 1, wherein the plurality of through channels (9; 209) comprise an annular through channel (9; 209) extending about the axis of rotation (A2) and adjacent to the active rotor sectors (15) and active stator sectors (16).

3) A wind turbine as claimed in Claim 1 or 2, wherein the plurality of through channels (19) comprise a plurality of straight through channels (19), each adjacent to a respective active rotor sector (15).

4) A wind turbine as claimed in Claim 3, wherein

each straight through channel (19) is bounded by the rotor supporting structure (10) and by an active rotor sector (15).

5) A wind turbine as claimed in Claim 4, wherein each active rotor sector (15) comprises at least one row of magnetized modules (17) extending parallel to the axis of rotation (A2); and each straight through channel (19) is bounded by the row of magnetized modules (17) of the respective active rotor sector (15).

6) A wind turbine as claimed in Claim 5, wherein each straight through channel (19) extends parallel to the axis of rotation (A2).

7) A wind turbine as claimed in one of Claims 3 to 6, wherein each active rotor sector (15) comprises at least two rows of magnetized modules (17); the plurality of straight through channels (19) comprising a plurality of intermediate through channels (21), each bounded by both the rows of magnetized modules (17) of a respective active rotor sector (15).

8) A wind turbine as claimed in Claim 7, wherein the two rows of magnetized modules (17) are spaced radially apart.

9) A wind turbine as claimed in Claim 7 or 8, wherein the intermediate through channels (21) extend parallel to the axis of rotation (A2).

10) A wind turbine as claimed in any one of the

foregoing Claims, wherein the plurality of through channels (9, 19; 9, 19, 209, 19) extend, parallel to the axis of rotation (A2), between a cooling fluid inlet end (24) and a cooling fluid outlet end (25).

11) A wind turbine as claimed in Claim 10, wherein the cooling system (27; 127) comprises a suction assembly (29; 129) designed to draw cooling fluid from the outlet end (25) of the plurality of through channels (9, 19); the cooling circuit (28; 128) extending partly along the suction assembly (29; 129).

12) A wind turbine as claimed in Claim 11, wherein the suction assembly (29) comprises at least one suction port (31) facing the outlet end (25) of the through channels (9, 19).

13) A wind turbine as claimed in Claim 3, wherein the suction port (31) is integral with the stator supporting structure (11).

14) A wind turbine as claimed in any one of Claims 11 to 13, and comprising a nacelle (3) integral with the stator supporting structure (11); wherein the cooling circuit (28) is a closed circuit; the suction assembly (29) comprises a heat exchanger (32), and a cooling fluid delivery port (33) inside the nacelle (3); and the cooling circuit (28) extends partly between the delivery port (33) and the inlet end (24) of the plurality of through channels (9, 19).

15) A wind turbine as claimed in any one of Claims 11 to 13, and comprising a nacelle (103); wherein the cooling circuit (128) is an open circuit; and the suction assembly (29) extends between the outlet end (25) of the plurality of through channels (9, 19) and an exhaust opening (136) in the nacelle (103).

16) A wind turbine as claimed in Claim 15, wherein the cooling system (127; 227) comprises a cooling fluid feed opening (133; 268); the cooling circuit (128; 228) extending partly between the feed opening (133; 268) and the inlet end (24) of the through channels (9; 19).

17) A wind turbine as claimed in Claim 16, and comprising a hub (104); and wherein the feed opening (133) is formed in the hub (104).

18) A wind turbine as claimed in Claim 15, wherein the feed opening (268) is formed in the nacelle (203).

19) A wind turbine as claimed in any one of Claims 10 to 17, wherein the cooling circuit (28; 128) extends through openings (14) formed in the rotor supporting structure (10), so as to feed cooling fluid to the inlet end (24) of the through channels (9, 19).

20) A wind turbine as claimed in any one of the foregoing Claims, wherein the wind turbine (1) comprises a further electric machine (206; 6), in turn comprising a further stator (208; 8) with a further stator supporting structure (211; 11) and a further plurality

of active stator sectors (16) supported by the further stator supporting structure (211; 11), and a further rotor (207; 7) with a further rotor supporting structure (210; 10) and a further plurality of active rotor sectors (15) supported by the further rotor supporting structure (210; 10); a transmission assembly (258) connecting the rotor (7; 207) to the further rotor (207; 7); and a cooling system (227) comprising a further cooling circuit (228) extending partly along a plurality of further through channels (9; 19) adjacent to at least the further active rotor sectors (15) or further active stator sectors (16) of the further electric machine (206; 6).

21) A wind turbine as claimed in Claim 20, wherein the transmission assembly (258) comprises a hollow transmission shaft (262); the cooling system (227) comprises a suction assembly (229) for drawing cooling fluid from an outlet end (25) of the plurality of through channels (9, 19) in the electric machine (6), and which extends partly inside the transmission shaft (262); and the cooling circuit (128) extends partly along the suction assembly (229).

22) A wind turbine as claimed in Claim 21, wherein the transmission shaft (262) comprises a first hollow cylinder (263) comprising openings (265); and the suction assembly (229) comprises at least one suction

port defined by an annular baffle (266) extending about the first hollow cylinder (263) and for guiding cooling fluid from the outlet end (25) of the through channels (9, 19) in the electric machine (6) into the transmission shaft (262).

23) A wind turbine as claimed in Claim 22, wherein the suction assembly (229) comprises a further annular baffle (267) extending inside the further rotor (207), connected to the transmission shaft (262), and for guiding cooling fluid from inside the transmission shaft (262) to an exhaust opening (136) in the nacelle (3).

24) A wind turbine as claimed in any one of the foregoing Claims, wherein the cooling fluid is air.

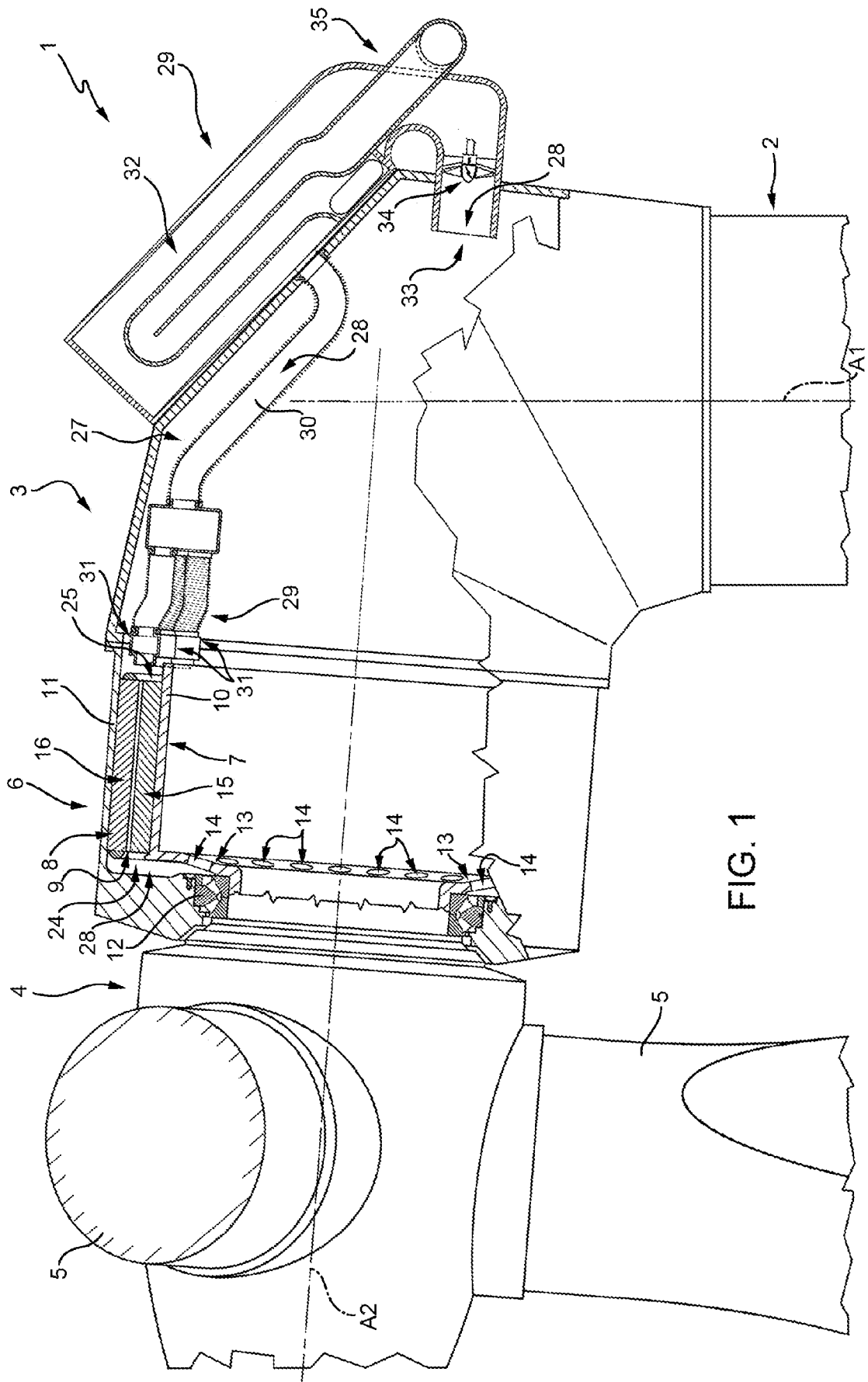


FIG. 1

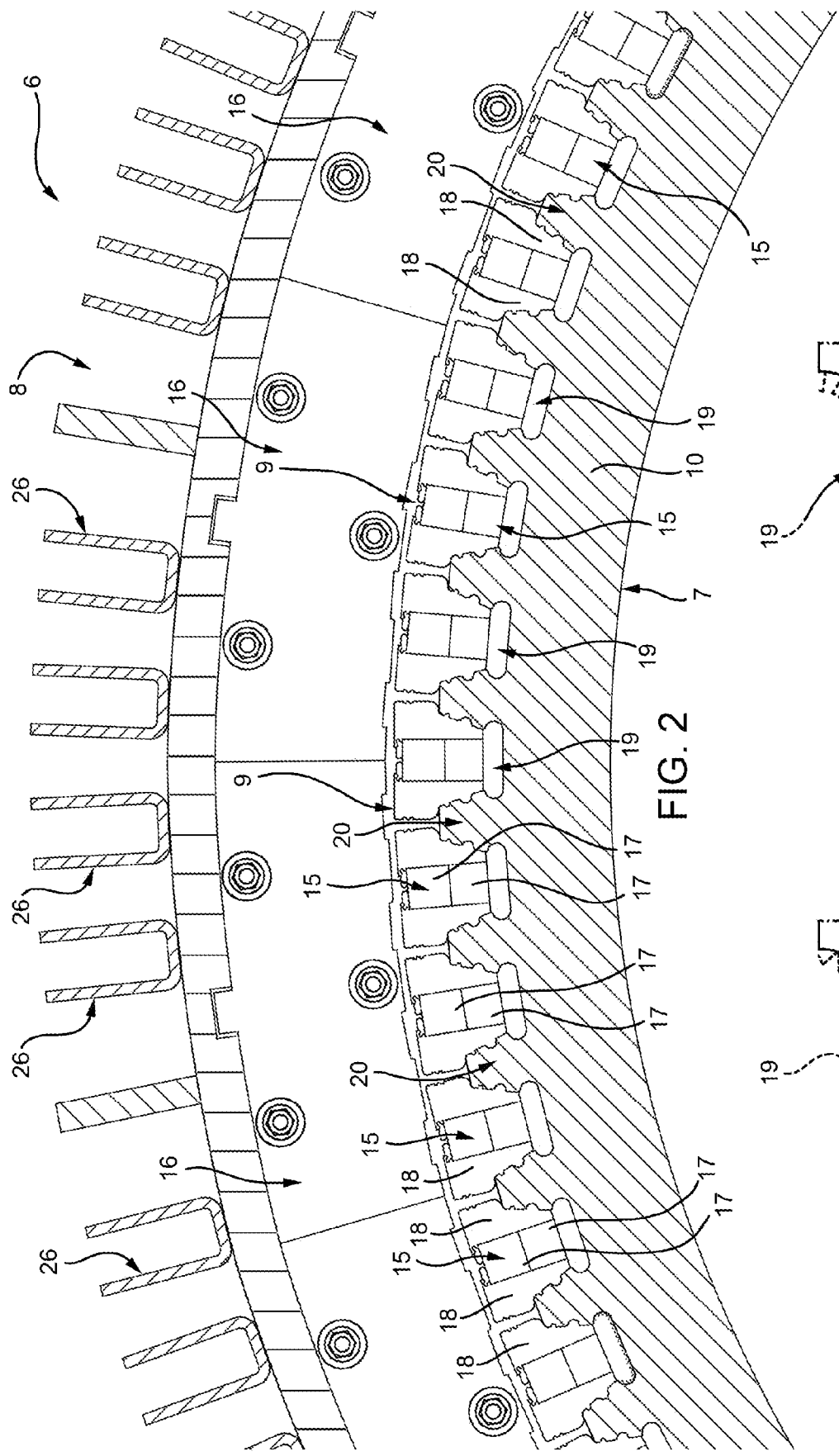


FIG. 2

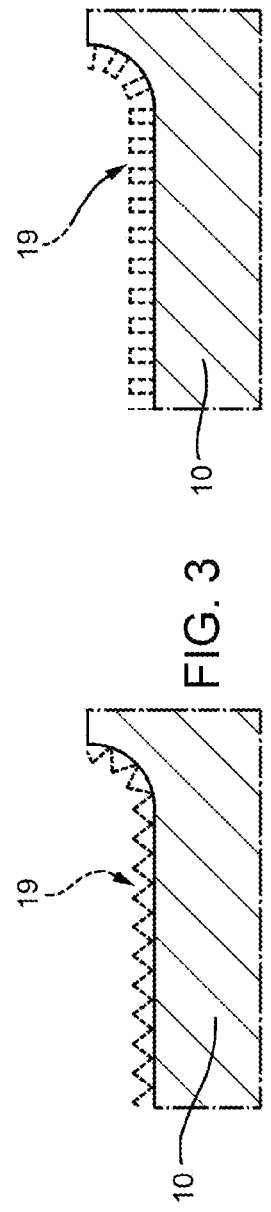
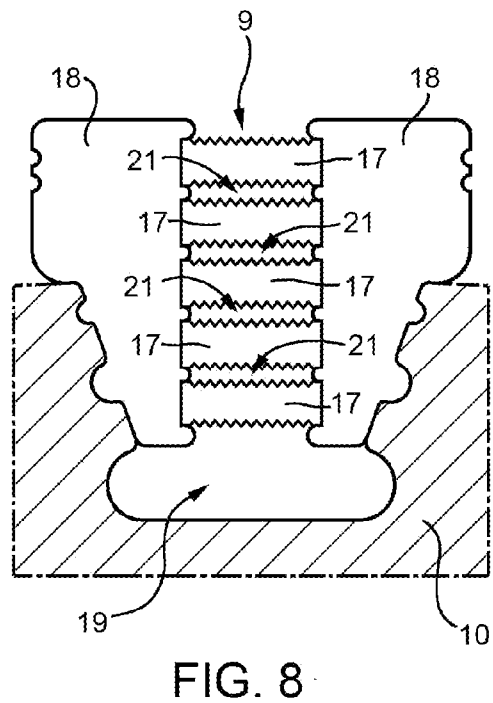
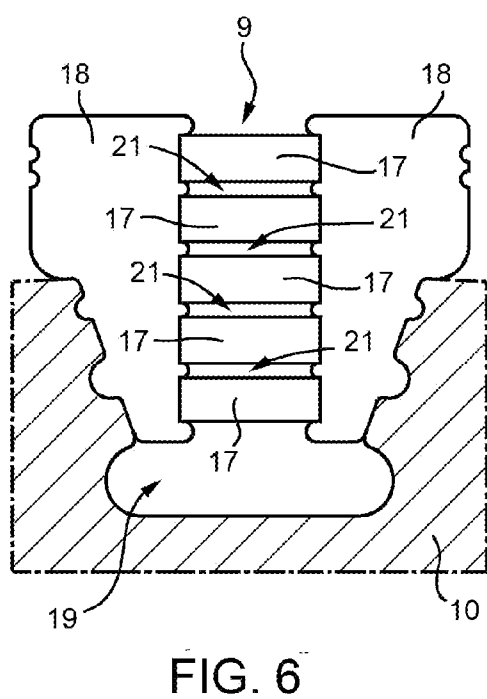
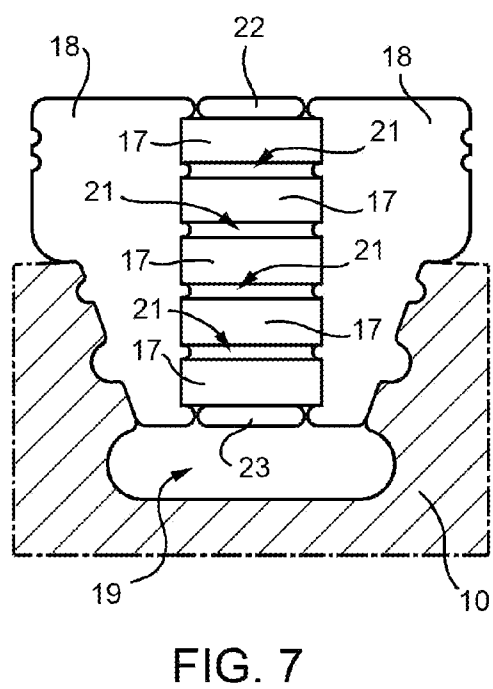
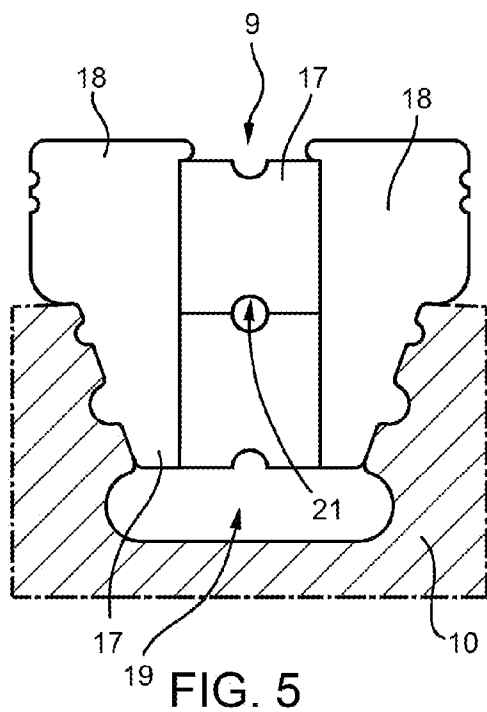


FIG. 3

FIG. 4



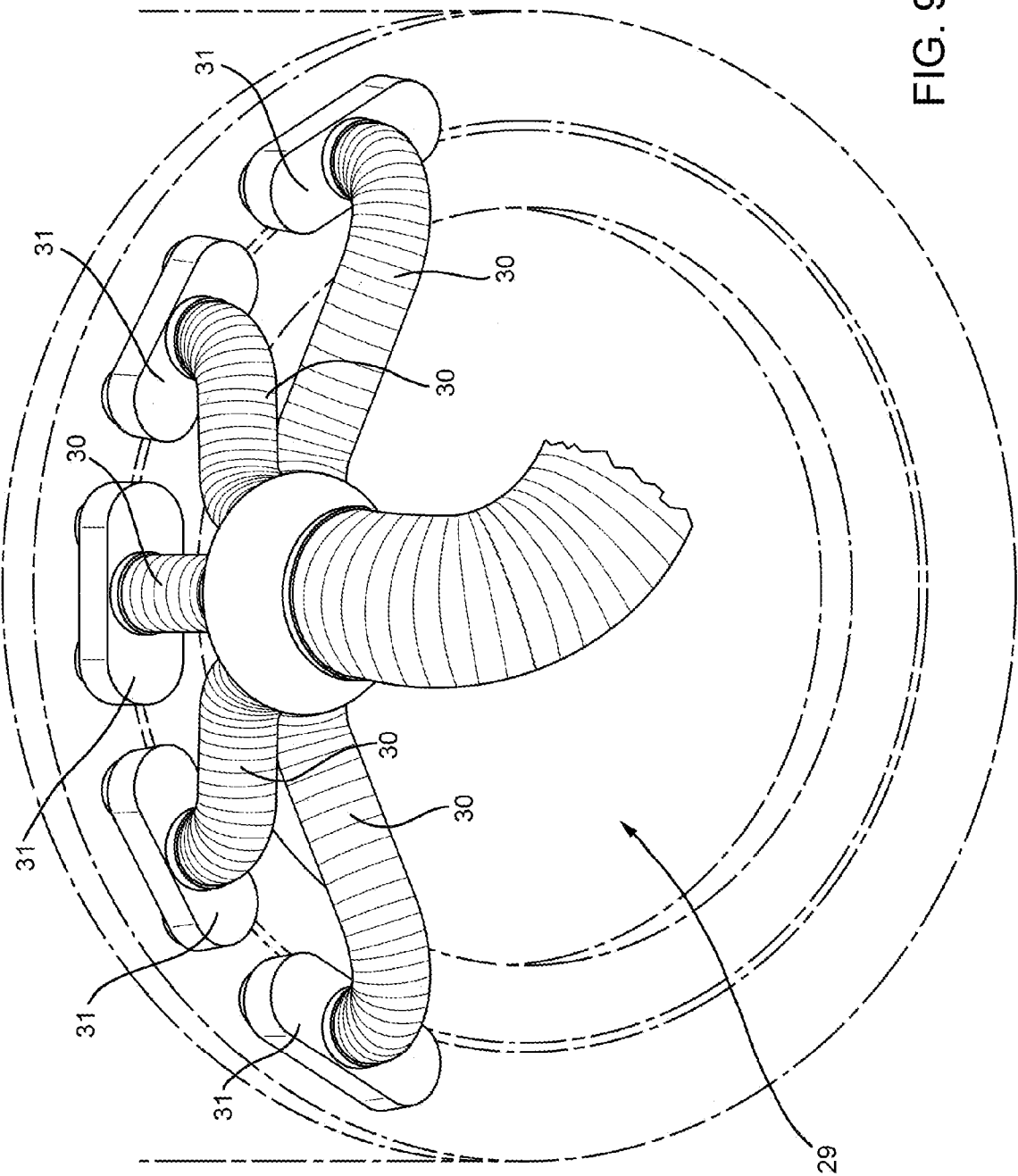
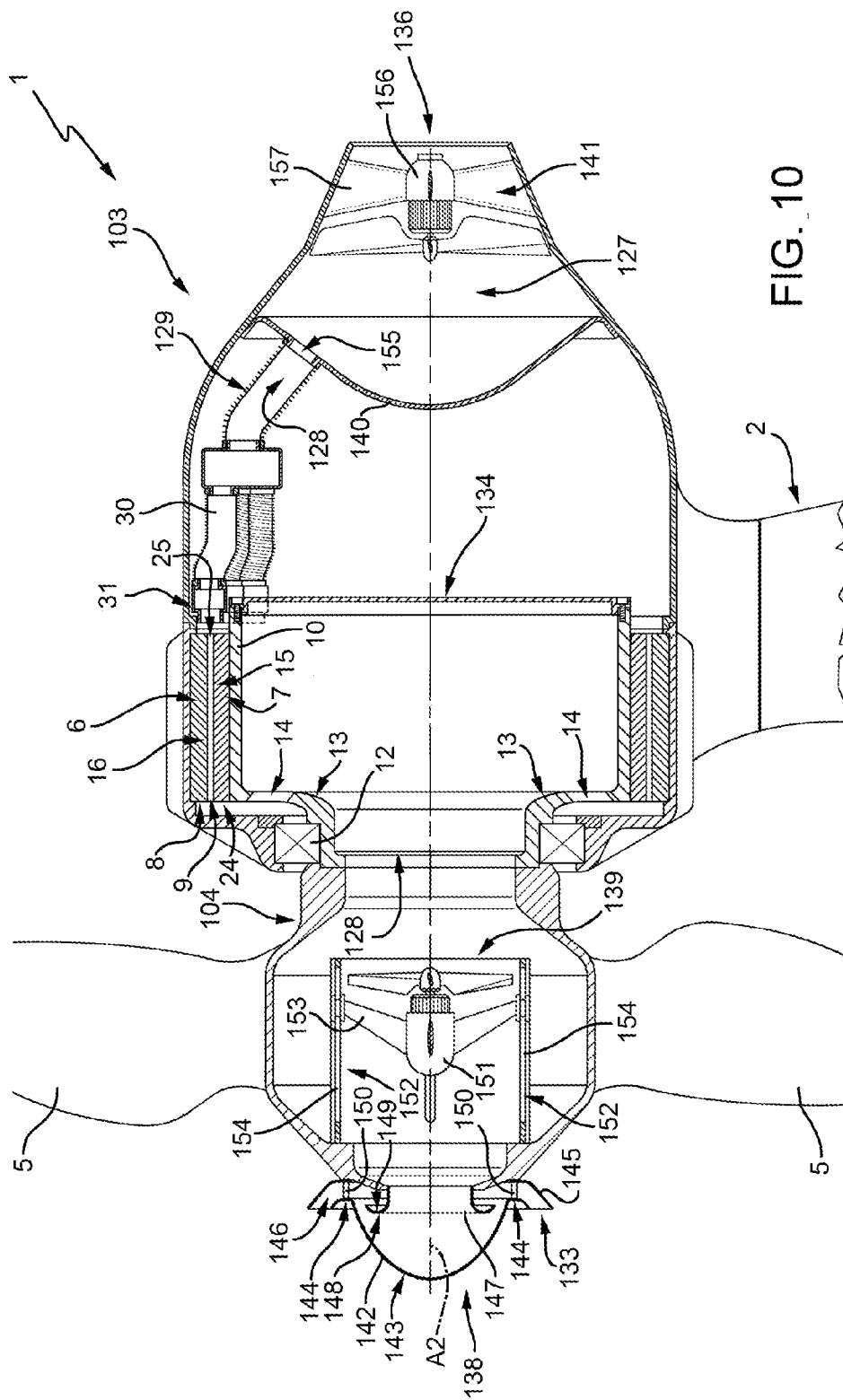


FIG. 9



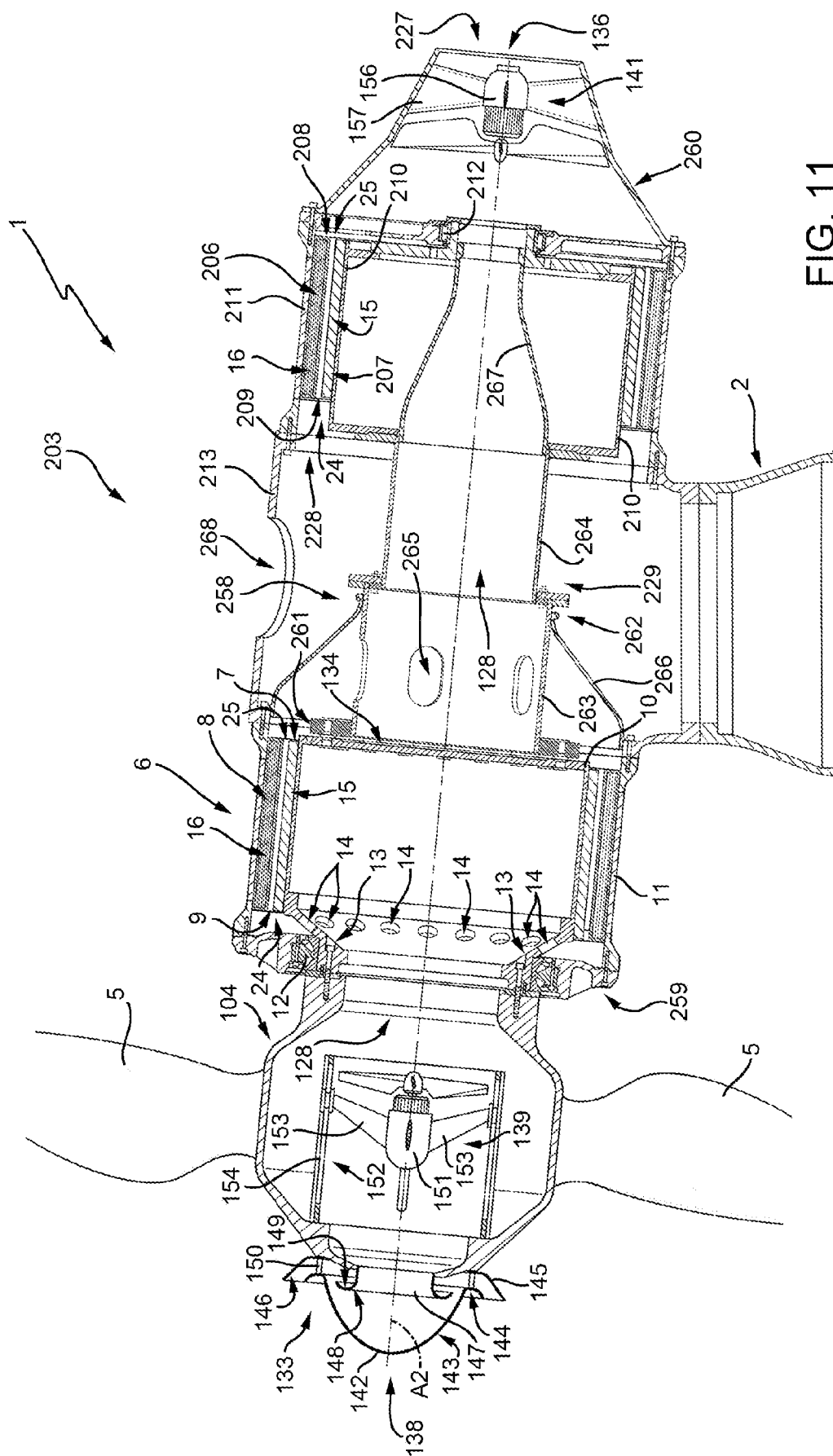


FIG. 11