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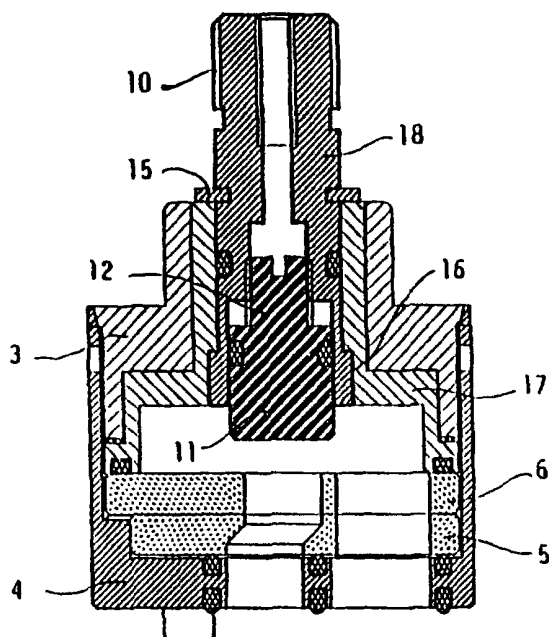
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- (72) Inventor; and
(75) Inventor/Applicant (for US only): **KNAPP, Francesco** [IT/IT]; Via Giacomo Leopardi 28, I-Cava Manara (IT).
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- (74) Agent: **ANDRES, Mark**; Eisenführ, Speiser & Partner, Martinistrasse 24, 28195 Bremen (DE).
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- (71) Applicant (for all designated States except US): **MASCO CORPORATION OF INDIA** [US/US]; 55 East 111th Street, Indianapolis, IN 46280 (US).
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(54) Title: VALVE CARTRIDGE WITH MULTIPLE PART ACTUATION MEANS



(57) Abstract: A device that can be applied to cartridges for water equipment, intended to receive a rotary operating member (9) for the purpose of promoting the structural unification of the largest possible number of parts making up the cartridges, where the rotary fitting (17) inside the cartridge is by itself not provided with a control pin and instead has a coupling means (16) and where the control pin of the cartridge is made separately from the internal rotary fitting and has an internal coupling means complementary to the coupling means presented by the internal rotary fitting and external coupling means (10) suitable for meeting the requirements of a handling member for which the cartridge is arranged. The internal rotary fitting of each type of cartridge can thus be unified, just as other parts of the cartridge, and can be provided with a unified coupling means, and with the cartridge, one can coordinate several control pins (18), all provided with one and the same unified internal coupling means complementary to the unified coupling means presented by the internal rotary fitting and presenting diverse external coupling means suitable to meet the requirements of different operating members.



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VALVE CARTRIDGE WITH MULTIPLE PART ACTUATION MEANS

The object of this invention is a device that can be applied to cartridges for water equipment, intended to receive a rotary operating member for the purpose of promoting the structural unification of the largest possible number of parts making up the cartridges.

One problem faced by designers of cartridges for water equipment consists in the fact that the purchasers, generally faucet-producing companies, intend to apply to the control pins of cartridges some operating members of their own production or design such as handles, knobs, long or short levers and so forth and so on. For the purpose of being coupled to the control pins of the cartridges, these operating members are equipped with means that are not unified and therefore present a multiplicity of diverse diameters and profiles and must be coupled to the control pins of the cartridges at distances that are also different from the body of the cartridge. This forces cartridges designers to produce each type of cartridge intended to serve various purchasers through a multiplicity of models whose control pins are suitable for receiving different operating members. Therefore, the control pins of these cartridges must, in turn, be made with a multiplicity of shapes, while many other parts of the cartridges can be unified structurally. However, according to the state of the art, the control pin of a cartridge is made in one piece only and with an internal rotary fitting that has a more or less complex structure and, therefore,

the entire assembly, made up of the control pin and the internal rotary fitting, must be made in different shapes, thus generating considerable work.

The main purpose of this invention is to provide sensible support for the economical production of cartridges for water equipment, thus making it possible to limit the above-mentioned major effort. Another purpose of the invention is to permit the insertion in a cartridge of a control pin that can perform other operations in addition to the operation of transmitting movement from one operating member to an internal mobile fitting without any need to modify other parts of the cartridge.

The main purpose of this invention is attained by virtue of the fact that the internal rotary fitting of the cartridge is in itself devoid of any control pin and instead has a coupling means and that the control pin of the cartridge is made separately from the internal rotary fitting and has an internal coupling means that complements the coupling means presented by the internal rotary fitting and an external coupling means suitable for meeting the requirements of an operating member for which the cartridge is prepared.

Preferably, said coupling means of the rotary fitting and of the control pin consists of portions that do not have an entirely circular section, especially dented or prismatic sections or circular sections interrupted by reliefs, hollows or facings when they are reciprocally involved in transmitting a rotary movement from the control pin to the internal rotary fitting.

In this way, the rotary fitting of a certain type of cartridge can also be unified as many other parts of the same cartridge and can present a unified coupling means, while the need for providing different control pins to meet the various requirements of the purchasers is met by making differentiated parts that comprise only control pins having all of the unified means for coupling to the rotary fitting and differing only in the characteristics of shape and external

dimensions corresponding to those required by the operating members for which the cartridge is prepared. This results in a considerable reduction of major production costs caused by the impossibility of completely unifying the cartridges.

Advantageously, the control pin of the cartridge is so arranged as to be inserted in the rotary fitting during the assembly of the cartridge proceeding from the inside to the outside, and it is fixed in its axial position by means of a fixing member such as an elastic ring inserted in the outer part of the control pin after its coupling to the rotary fitting

The invention can be used in all kinds of water equipment whose operating member is subjected only to rotary movements, and therefore, it can be used in simple faucets, in stopcocks, in thermostatic mixing devices, in progressive mixing faucets, in deviation devices, in water tapping controllers and so forth and so on.

These and other features, purposes and advantages of the object of this invention will appear more clearly from the following description of some embodiments consisting of nonrestrictive examples with reference to the attached drawings where:

Figure 1 is a profile view of an example of the water equipment where, according to the state of the art, the control pin of the cartridge is made in one piece with an internal rotary fitting;

Figure 2 is a profile view of a cartridge according to the invention that performs functions similar to those of the cartridge of the equipment according to Figure 1;

and Figures 3 and 4 are profile views of a cartridge of the same type as in Figure 2, but provided with control pins having different features.

The water equipment illustrated in Figure 1 is a progressive mixing faucet based on a prior patent by the same inventor. It comprises a body 1 in which are made passages for the entry of hot and cold water (only one of which is visible in the drawing) and for drawing mixed water. Body 1 is provided with a lid 2 so placed as to hold in an internal cavity the body of a cartridge consisting of two complementary parts 3 and 4. Inside body 3-4 of the cartridge, there are a fixed blocking plate 5 -- in this case, integral with part 4 of the body of the cartridge -- and a mobile blocking plate 6 integral with rotary fitting 7. The latter is extended in one piece in a control pin 8, which protrudes from body 3-4 of the cartridge and of lid 2 of the water equipment to receive a handling member, in this case, a lever 9, connected to control pin 8 with the help of coupling means 10.

Furthermore, in this case, control pin 8 contains, inside, a plunger 11 that by means of a threaded part 12 can be placed in an axially adjustable position in front of a central tapping passage of mobile blocking plate 6 for the purpose of regulating the maximum flow volume that can be drawn from the equipment.

Many parts of the structure of this cartridge and its operation do not involve the application of this invention and therefore are not described in detail.

Since different producers of similar water equipment can require that operating levers 9 or some other operating members be applied to them, where the features of coupling means 10 are different, cartridge 3-12 must be provided with different coupling means 10, in other words, with different control pins 8. This entails the production of different shapes of the entire complex made up of

control pin 8 and internal rotary fitting 7, which, in turn, causes a considerable design and construction effort, as mentioned earlier.

The perfected cartridge according to the invention, shown in Figure 2, has a body consisting of two complementary parts 3 and 4 where there are housed a fixed blocking plate 5 and a mobile blocking plate 6. The latter is integral with a rotary fitting 17. In contrast to the state of the art and in light of Figure 1, this rotary fitting 17 is not by itself provided with a control pin and instead has a coupling means 16 that can consist of a dented or prismatic region or also a region having reliefs, hollows or facings that modify a circular section so as to render it suitable for transmitting a rotation. This coupling means can consist simply of a configuration of rotary fitting 17 or it can be made up of a metal insert applied to rotary fitting 17. It is particularly advantageous that the metal insert be co-stamped in making the rotary fitting 17 of plastic substance.

In turn, control pin 18 is made separately from mobile fitting 17 and can be introduced into it during the assembly of the cartridge, proceeding from the inside to the outside, and it has internal coupling means 16 that are complementary to those featured by mobile fitting 17 and external coupling means 10, intended to receive an operating member. In the figures, the coupling members of mobile fitting 17 and of pin 18 are shown coupled together and they are therefore not reciprocally distinguishable and are labeled by the same reference 16. The internal coupling means 16 of control pin 18 can also be made up of configurations of control pin 18 or -- as the case may be and if control pin 18 is not itself metallic -- can be made of a metallic insert.

Furthermore, control pin 18 can on its outer surface have a ring-shaped seat suitable for receiving an elastic ring 15 or some other suitable fixing member, which will axially fix its position with respect to mobile fitting 17, while the rotary solidarity between these two parts is ensured by coupling means

16 that are reciprocally involved. Therefore, once the cartridge is assembled, control pin 18 behaves in the same manner as if it were made integrally with rotary fitting 17. But as one can see, pin 18, and it alone, can be used in varied shapes and dimensions so that the external coupling means 10 turn out to be suitable for receiving a corresponding operating member with varying configuration, while rotary equipment 17 with its coupling means 16 becomes one of the parts of the cartridge that can be structurally unified.

Said elastic ring 15 can be absent in cases where coupling means 16 are so configured as to be by themselves capable of ensuring also axial solidarity between rotary fitting 17 and control pin 18. This can be achieved in a particularly effective fashion when a metallic insert, constituting coupling means, 16 is co-stamped in rotary fitting 17.

According to Figure 2, control pin 18 inside contains a plunger 11 that by means of a threaded part 12 can be placed in an axially adjustable position in front of a water tapping passage in mobile blocking plate 6 so as to regulate the maximum flow rate value that can be drawn from the equipment. In this way, control pin 18 also has a function different from the function of transmitting movement. Therefore, the cartridge according to Figure 2 performs the same functions as the cartridge included in the progressive faucet according to Figure 1.

The function of limiting the maximum volume of water that can be drawn is not always required, and therefore, for the cartridge of the type shown in Figure 2, one can arrange control pins 18' and 18", according to Figures 3 and 4, whose structure -- in addition to meeting with regard to external coupling means 10' and 10" (as shown in Figures 3 and 4) meet diverse requirements generated by the operating members to which the cartridge is intended -- features a simpler and therefore more economical makeup.

As we can see, the use of the invention makes it possible -- while producing cartridges for water equipment of various kinds -- to achieve unification that is greater than the unification that was possible according to prior technique, therefore, resulting in lower production costs; this unification can be preserved also for internal rotary equipment even in cases where the control pin has particular functions.

It must be understood that the invention is not confined to the embodiments described and illustrated as examples. Similar modifications are within the reach of the expert in the field, for example, as regards the structure and construction of internal coupling means 16 and the axial fixing of control pin 18, which may be obtained by means different from an elastic ring 15 and which may possibly be ensured by internal coupling means 16 themselves, as well as regarding possible additional functions assigned to the control pin. It must also be understood that the internal operating structures of the cartridge that are controlled by rotary fitting 17 can be of any kind, different from the kind shown by example, without any direct relation to the application of the invention.

These and other modifications and any substitution with technical equivalents can be made in the subject matter described and illustrated without departing from the scope of the invention and the coverage of this patent.

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CLAIMS

1. Device that can be applied to cartridges for water equipment intended to receive a rotary operating member so as to promote the structural unification of the largest possible number of parts making up the cartridges, characterized in that the internal rotary fitting of the cartridge is by itself devoid of any control pins and instead has a coupling means and that the control pin of the cartridge is made separately from the internal rotary fitting and has an internal coupling means complementary to the coupling means presented by the internal rotary fitting and an external coupling means suitable to meet the requirements of an operating member for which the cartridge is prepared.

2. Device according to Claim 1, above, characterized in that the internal rotary fitting of each type of cartridge is unified as are other parts of the cartridge and is provided with a unified coupling means and that, coordinated with the cartridge, are several control pins, all provided with one and the same unified internal coupling means complementary to the unified coupling means presented by the internal rotary fitting and featuring diverse external coupling means suitable to meet the requirements of different operating members.

3. Device according to Claim 1, above, characterized in that said coupling means of the rotary fitting and of the control pin consist of portions with a not entirely circular section, especially dented or prismatic sections or circular sections interrupted by reliefs, hollows or facings capable of transmitting a rotary movement from the control pin to the internal rotary fitting when they are reciprocally engaged.

4. Device according to Claim 1, above, characterized in that the control pin of the cartridge is so arranged as to be inserted in the rotary fitting during the assembly of the cartridge, proceeding from the inside to the outside.

5. Device according to Claim 4, above, characterized in that the control pin is fixed in its axial position by means of a fixing member such as an elastic

ring inserted in the external part of the control pin after it has been coupled to the rotary fitting.

6. Device according to Claim 1, above, characterized in that the control pin is also fixed axially with the help of coupling means that provide connection to the rotary fitting.

7. Device according to Claim 1, above, characterized in that the coupling means presented by the rotary fitting and/or the internal coupling means presented by the control pin consist of a metallic insert.

8. Device according to Claim 7, above, characterized in that a metallic insert is co-stamped while making the rotary fitting of plastic substance.

9. Device according to Claim 1, above, characterized in that for the cartridge, there are arranged control pins capable of performing other functions in addition to the function of transmitting rotary motion from an operating member to the internal rotary fitting of the cartridge.

10. Device according to Claim 9, above, characterized in that inside the control pin, there is a plunger that by means of a threaded part can be placed in an adjustable axial position in front of a simple passage of the mobile blocking plate of the cartridge to regulate the maximum water flow rate value that can be drawn from the equipment.

11. Cartridge for water equipment, characterized by the special features, arrangements and operation as shown in the above description and the attached drawings ore replaced by their technical equivalents, taken as a whole, in their various combinations or separately.

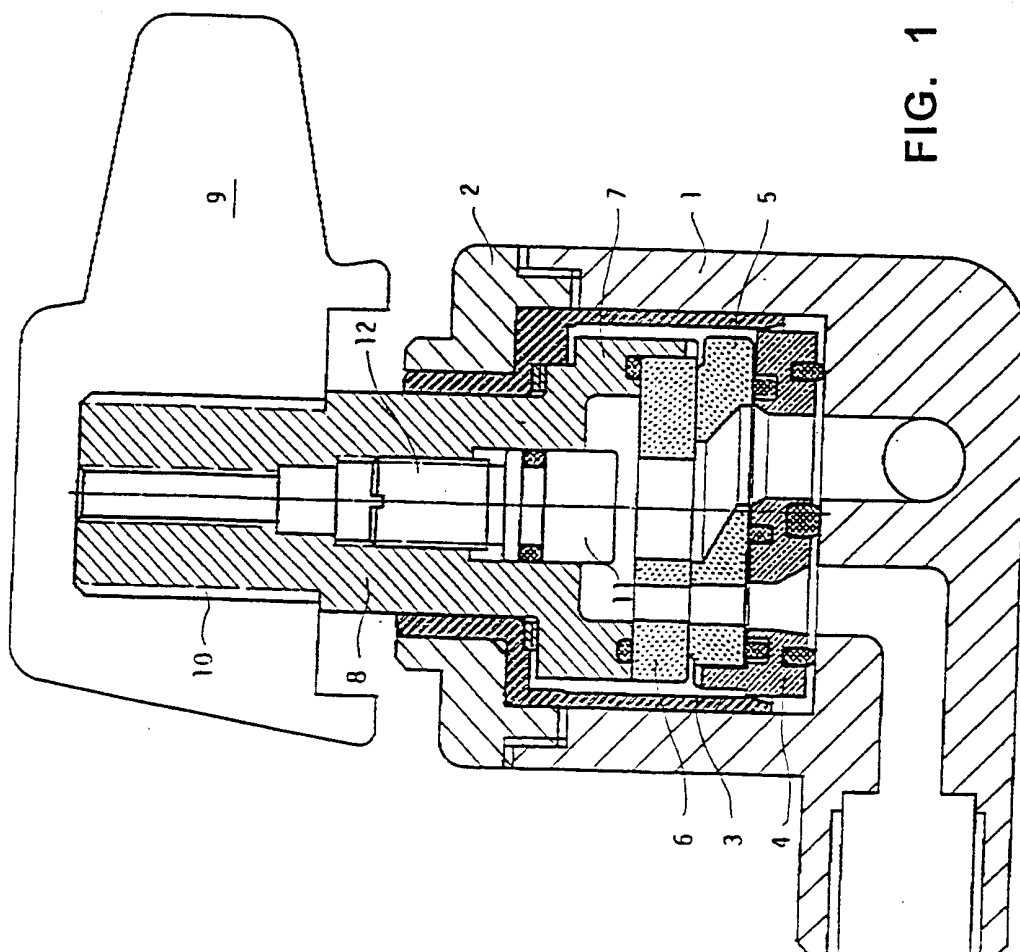


FIG. 1

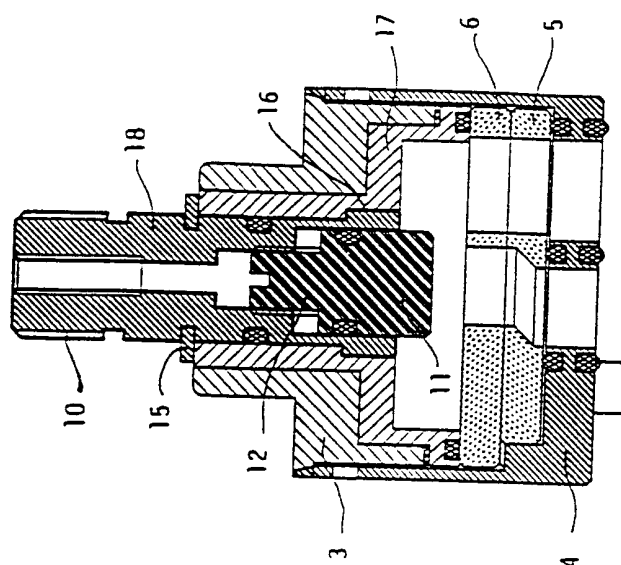


FIG. 2

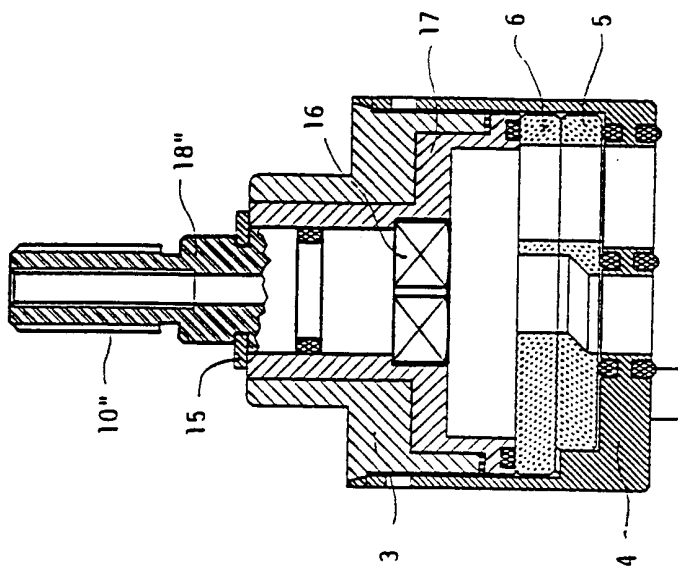


FIG. 4

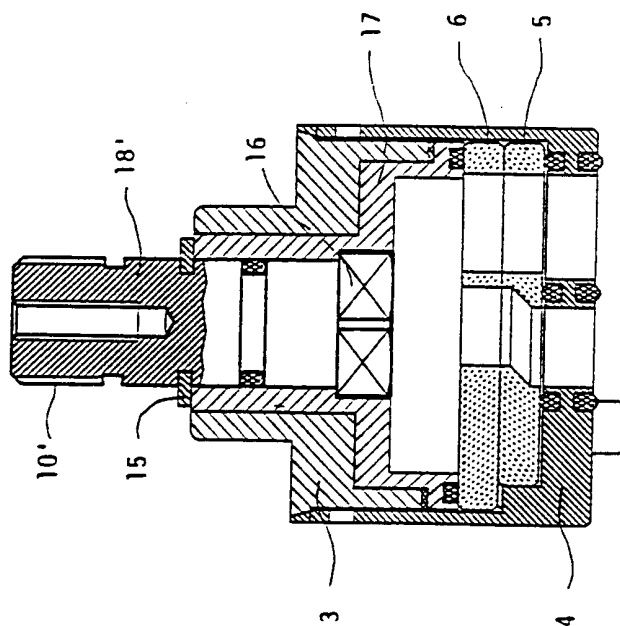


FIG. 3

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Inter. Application No

PCT/EP 00/11868

A. CLASSIFICATION OF SUBJECT MATTER

IPC 7 F16K11/074 F16K1/52 F16K3/32

According to International Patent Classification (IPC) or to both national classification and IPC

B. FIELDS SEARCHED

Minimum documentation searched (classification system followed by classification symbols)

IPC 7 F16K

Documentation searched other than minimum documentation to the extent that such documents are included in the fields searched

Electronic data base consulted during the international search (name of data base and, where practical, search terms used)

EPO-Internal, WPI Data, PAJ

C. DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

Category *	Citation of document, with indication, where appropriate, of the relevant passages	Relevant to claim No.
X	US 4 715 406 A (KRESS HERMANN) 29 December 1987 (1987-12-29) column 3, line 44 - line 52 figure 1	1,4,6,9, 11
X	EP 0 647 807 B (EMHART INC) 12 April 1995 (1995-04-12) column 3, line 47 - line 56 figure 7	1,4,6,9, 11
X	WO 99 18378 A (KNAPP FRANCESCO ; MASCO CORP (US)) 15 April 1999 (1999-04-15) page 7, line 11 page 9, line 1 - line 5 page 9, line 21 - page 10, line 3 figure 4	1-8,11
Y		9,10

☒ Further documents are listed in the continuation of box C.

☒ Patent family members are listed in annex.

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Y document of particular relevance; the claimed invention cannot be considered to involve an inventive step when the document is combined with one or more other such documents, such combination being obvious to a person skilled in the art.

Z document member of the same patent family

Date of the actual completion of the international search

20 February 2001

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Name and mailing address of the ISA

European Patent Office, P.B. 5818 Patentlaan 2
NL - 2280 HV Rijswijk
Tel. (+31-70) 340-2040, Tx. 31 651 epo nl,
Fax: (+31-70) 340-3016

Authorized officer

Ceuca, A-N

INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT

Inter national Application No

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C.(Continuation) DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED TO BE RELEVANT

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information on patent family members

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