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(54) Titre : COMPOSITES ET MEMBRANES COMPOSITES
(54) Title: COMPOSITES AND COMPOSITE MEMBRANES

(57) Abrégé/Abstract:

The invention relates to a composite or a composite membrane consisting of an ionomer and of an inorganic optionally functionalized phyllosilicate. The isomer can be: (a) a cation exchanger polymer; (b) an anion exchanger polymer; (c) a polymer containing both anion exchanger groupings as well as cation exchanger groupings on the polymer chain; (d) a blend consisting of (a) and (b), whereby the mixture ratio can range from 100 % (a) to 100 % (b). The blend can be ionically and even covalently cross-linked. The inorganic constituents can be selected from the group of the phyllosilicates or tectosilicates. The use of bentonites and zeolites are generally preferred in special montmorillonite. The mixture ratio isomer:bentonite ranges from 99:1 to 30:70. The invention also relates to the application of the composites/composite membranes: as proton conductors in membrane fuel cells (H_2 fuel cells PEFC, direct methanol fuel cells DMFC) at temperatures greater than 100 °C; in (electro)membrane separation methods such as dialysis, diffusion dialysis, gas separation, pervaporation, perstraction and in microfiltration and ultrafiltration, particularly due to their antifouling properties, and; as catalytic membranes in catalytic membrane reactors.

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(54) Title: COMPOSITES AND COMPOSITE MEMBRANES

(54) Bezeichnung: KOMPOSITE UND KOMPOSITMEMBRANEN

(57) **Abstract:** The invention relates to a composite or a composite membrane consisting of an ionomer and of an inorganic optionally functionalized phyllosilicate. The isomer can be: (a) a cation exchanger polymer; (b) an anion exchanger polymer; (c) a polymer containing both anion exchanger groupings as well as cation exchanger groupings on the polymer chain; (d) a blend consisting of (a) and (b), whereby the mixture ratio can range from 100 % (a) to 100 % (b). The blend can be ionically and even covalently cross-linked. The inorganic constituents can be selected from the group of the phyllosilicates or tectosilicates. The use of bentonites and zeolites are generally preferred in special montmorillonite. The mixture ratio isomer:bentonite ranges from 99:1 to 30:70. The invention also relates to the application of the composites/composite membranes: as proton conductors in membrane fuel cells (H₂ fuel cells PEFC, direct methanol fuel cells DMFC) at temperatures greater than 100 °C; in (electro)membrane separation methods such as dialysis, diffusion dialysis, gas separation, pervaporation, perstraction and in microfiltration and ultrafiltration, particularly due to their antifouling properties, and; as catalytic membranes in catalytic membrane reactors.

(57) **Zusammenfassung:** Gegenstand der Erfindung ist ein Komposit oder ein Kompositmembran aus einem Ionomeren und einem anorganischen gegebenenfalls funktionalisierten Schichtsilikat. Dabei kann das Ionomer sein: (a) ein Kationenaustauscherpolymer; (b) ein Anionenaustauscherpolymer; (c) ein Polymer, das auf der Polymerkette sowohl Anionenaustauschergruppierungen als auch Kationenaustauschergruppierungen enthält; (d) ein Blend aus (a) und (b), wobei das Mischungsverhältnis von 100 % (a) zu 100 % (b) reichen kann. Der Blend kann ionisch und noch kovalent vernetzt sein. Dabei kann die anorganische Komponente aus der Gruppe der Schicht- oder Gerüstsilikate sein. Allgemein sind die Bentonite und Zeolithe, im Speziellen Montmorillonit bevorzugt. Das Mischungsverhältnis Ionomer/Bentonit reicht dabei von 99/1 zu 30/70. Des Weiteren ist Gegenstand dieser Erfindung die Anwendung der Komposites/Kompositmembranen: als Protonenleiter in Membranbrennstoffzellen (H₂-Brennstoffzellen PEFC, Direktmethanolbrennstoffzellen DMFC) im Temperaturbereich über 100 °C; in (Elektro)membrantrennverfahren wie Dialyse, Diffusionsdialyse, Gastrennung, Pervaporation, Perstraktion und in Mikro- und Ultrafiltration insbesondere wegen ihrer Antifoulingeigenschaften; als katalytische Membranen in Katalysator-Membran-Reaktoren.

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COMPOSITES AND COMPOSITE MEMBRANES

State-of-the-art

Ionomer membranes are used in many processes for example in membrane fuel cells, in electrodialysis, in diffusion dialysis, in electrolysis (PEM electrolysis, chlorine alkali electrolysis) or in electrochemical processes.

A disadvantage of the actual membranes is however, that their proton conductivity at temperatures above 100°C in most cases decreases rapidly due to drying up of membranes. Temperatures above 100°C are, however, very interesting for fuel cell applications of ionomer membranes, because above 100°C the temperature regulation of fuel cells is greatly simplified and the catalysis of the fuel cell reaction is substantially improved (excess voltage decreased, no CO-loading anymore, which poisons the catalyst).

Only a few examples of membranes which still exhibit good proton conductivity even above 100°C are known from the literature, for example poly(phenylene)s having carbonyl-1,4-phenylene-oxyphenyl-4-sulfonic acid side groups. However the proton conductivity of these membranes decreases rapidly above 130°C and the reason for the good proton conductivity between 100°C and 130°C is also not clear.

Proton conductivity is based on the Grotthus mechanism with protons in acidic media and hydroxyl ions in alkaline media acting as charge carriers. There exists a structure cross-linked via hydrogen bonds enabling the actual charge transport. That means the water contained in the membrane plays an important part in the charge transport: without this

additional water there is no mentionable charge transport across the membrane in these commercially available membranes, they loose their function. Other new developments which use phosphate backbones instead of a fluorohydrocarbon backbone also need water as an additional network builder. (Alberti et al., SSPC9, Bled, Slowenia, 17.-21.8.1998, Extended Abstracts, p. 235). While the addition of smallest SiO_2 particles to the above mentioned membranes (Antonucci et al., SSPC9, Bled, Slowenia, 17.-21.8.1998, Extended Abstracts, p. 187) leads to a stabilization of proton conductivity up to 140°C, this only applies under operating conditions of a pressure of 4,5 bar. Without increased operating pressure these membranes also loose their water network above 100°C and dry up. A substantial disadvantage of all the above mentioned membrane types is therefore that even under best operating conditions they are usable at application temperatures of up to max. 100°C.

In the same manner as mentioned above Denton et al. (US 6,042,958) prepared composites from ion conducting polymers and porous substrates. As silica containing components they used glass, ceramics or silica. In the examples described therein the operating temperature was not increased above 80°C.

While in the direct methanol fuel cell (DMFC) sufficient water is present, methanol crossover through the membrane, however, results in a substantial decrease of power.

If composites of sulfonated polyaryletheretherketone membranes (EP 0574791 B1) or sulfonated polyethersulfone and silica are prepared, the membrane swells at an cation-exchange capacity of 1,5 [meq/g] to an extent that it is ultimately destroyed.

The advantage of the composites according to the invention and the membranes prepared herewith is the incorporation of an organic component, especially of protonated nitrogen bases into the cavities of the phyllosilicates which is a cross-linking component, when the base is provided on a polymer backbone. Furthermore the selective incorporation of cations or metal hydroxides with subsequent reaction to the corresponding metal oxides permits to vary the Lewis acid properties and size of the membrane cavities in a wide range. Moreover the phyllosilicates can be functionalized to interact with ionomers in which they are embedded or to influence the surrounding medium according to their functional group.

Phyllosilicates (clay minerals) have some interesting properties:

- They can bind hydrate water up to 250°C
- In these materials metal cations and metal oxides can be additionally incorporated inducing hereby an intrinsic proton conductivity according to the general scheme:
$$M^{n+}(H_2O) \rightarrow (M-OH)^{(n-1)+} + H^+ \quad [Zeolite, clay and heteropoly acid in organic reactions, Y.Izumi, K.Urabe, M.Onaka; 1992; Weinheim, VCH-Verlag, p.26].$$
- Phyllosilicates having Lewis acid cavities may intercalate by acid-base interaction with the basic groups of basic polymers [Kunststoffnanokomposite, symposium: Von der Invention zur Innovation, Publication at the Symposium of the Fonds of the Chemical Industry, 6th of may 1998 in Cologne].

Due to this property some types of phyllosilicate/polymer composites have been synthesized. Mühlhaupt et al. made

composites from montmorillonite and polypropylene, montmorillonite and polyamide, and montmorillonite and Perspex. In these composites, for example, the Perspex becomes hardly flammable due to the admixture with montmorillonite because the incorporated phyllosilicates are barriers to the pyrolysis gases formed on combustion.

Object of the present invention

Based on this prior art the object of the present invention was to provide composites which possess a high ion conductivity (especially proton conductivity) and simultaneously limited swelling ability and permit an operating temperature in electrochemical cells of above 100°C.

The invention relates thus to an ion conducting composite containing an acid and/or an organic base and a phyllosilicate, characterized in that the composition of the acid-base part is contained with 1 to 99 weight % and the phyllosilicate is contained with 99 to 1 weight %.

Description of the invention (product description)

(a) The acid may be a cation exchange polymer (having cation exchange groups $-SO_3H$, $-COOH$, $-PO_3H_2$, wherein the polymer can be modified with only one of the described cation exchange groups or with a blend of the described cation exchange groups); wherein the polymer can be not cross-linked or covalently cross-linked. The ion exchange capacity in general is comprised between 0,1 and 12 meq/g, more preferably between 0,3 and 8 meq/g, most preferably between 0,5 and 2 meq/g. Particularly preferred as backbone are thermoplastics.

(b) The acid can also be an organic or inorganic low molecular acid. In the inorganic acid case sulfuric and phosphoric acid are particularly preferred. In the organic acid case all low molecular acids that are sulfonic or carboxylic acids are taken into consideration, especially all amino sulfonic acids and the aminosulfochlorides as their precursors.

(c) The base may be

an anion-exchange polymer (having anion exchange groups $-\text{NR}_3^+$ ($\text{R}=\text{H}$, alkyl, aryl), pyridinium PyrR^+ , imidazolium ImR^+ , pyrazolium PyrazR^+ , triazolium TriR^+ and other organic basic aromatic and/or non-aromatic groups ($\text{R}=\text{H}$, alkyl, aryl), wherein the polymer can be modified with only one of the described anion exchange groups or with a blend of the described anion exchange groups) ; wherein the polymer can be non-cross-linked or covalently cross-linked. The anion exchange capacity herein is preferably between 1 and 15 meq/g, more preferably between 3 and 12 meq/g, most preferably between 6 and 10 meq/g. Preferred as backbone are again all thermoplastics, particularly polysulfone, polyetheretherketone, polybenzimidazole and polyvinylpyridine.

(d) The base can be an organic or inorganic low molecular base. As organic low molecular base all guanidine derivatives are particularly preferred.

(e) The functional group of the acid and the base may be in the same molecule. This molecule can be low or high molecular. If it is a polymer, then on the polymer chain there are anion exchange groups from (c) as well as cation exchange groups from (a).

(f) The above-mentioned acids and bases of (a) to (e) may be blended in the composite. Any mixing ratio can be chosen. The blend can be further covalently cross-linked in addition to the ionic cross-linking.

(g) If both the acid and the base are low molecular there is in addition an unmodified polymer contained in the composite.

(h) The inorganic active filler is a phyllosilicate based on montmorillonite, smectite, illite, sepiolite, palygorskite, muscovite, allevardite, amesite, hectorite, talc, fluorhectorite, saponite, beidelite, nontronite, stevensite, bentonite, mica, vermiculite, fluorvermiculite, halloysite, fluor containing synthetical talc types or blends of two or more of the above-mentioned phyllosilicates. The phyllosilicate can be delaminated or pillared. Particularly preferred is montmorillonite.

The weight ratio of the phyllosilicate is preferably from 1 to 80 %, more preferably from 2 to 30 % by weight, most preferably from 5 to 20 %.

Description of the functionalized phyllosilicate:

The term "a phyllosilicate" in general means a silicate, in which the SiO_4 tetraeders are connected in two-dimensional infinite networks. (The empirical formula for the anion is $(\text{Si}_2\text{O}_5^{2-})_n$). The single layers are linked to one another by the cations positioned between them, which are usually Na, K, Mg, Al or/and Ca in the naturally occurring phyllosilicates.

By the term "a delaminated functionalized phyllosilicate" we understand phyllosilicates in which the layer distances are at first increased by reaction with so-called functionalisation

agents. The layer thickness of such silicates before delamination is preferably 5 to 100 angstrom, more preferably 5 to 50 and most preferably 8 to 20 angstrom. To increase the layer distances (hydrophobisation) the phyllosilicates are reacted (before production of the composites according to the invention) with so-called functionalizing hydrophobisation agents which are often also called onium ions or onium salts.

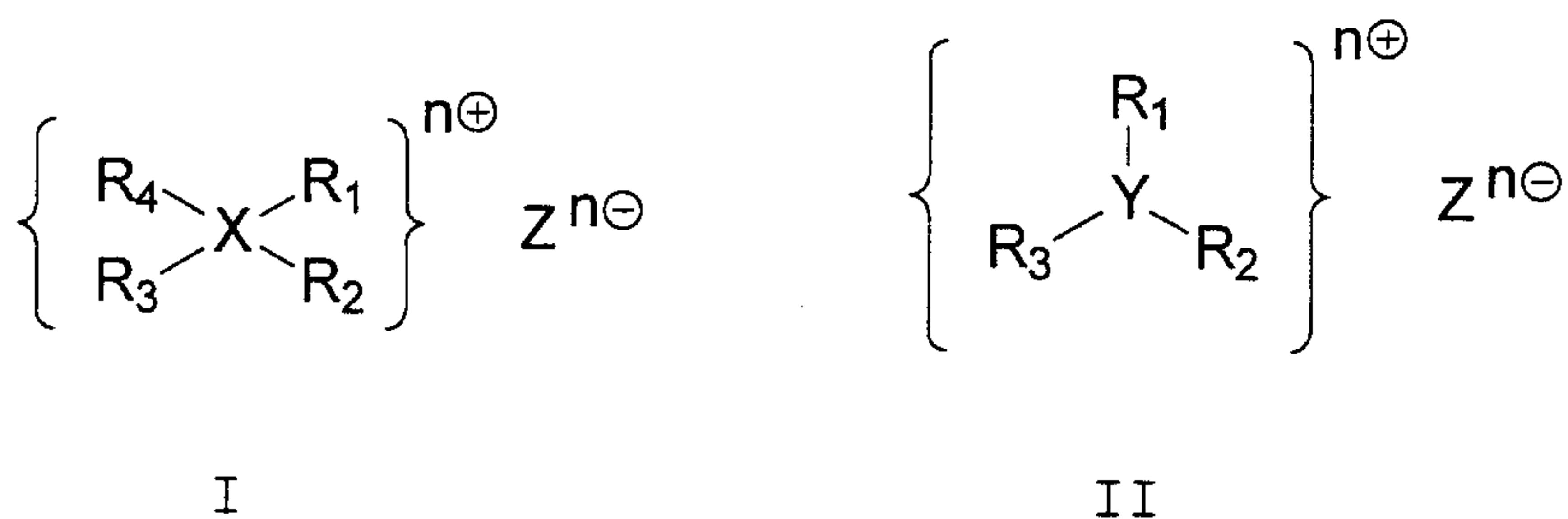
The cations of the phyllosilicates are replaced by organic functionalizing hydrophobisation agents whereby the desired layer distances which depend on the kind of the respective functionalizing molecule or polymer which is to be incorporated into the phyllosilicate can be adjusted by the kind of the organic residue.

The exchange of the metal ions can be complete or partial. Preferred is the complete exchange of metal ions. The quantity of exchangeable metal ions is usually expressed as milli equivalent (meq) per 1 g of phyllosilicate and is referred to as ion exchange capacity.

Preferred are phyllosilicates having a cation exchange capacity of at least 0,5, preferably 0,8 to 1,3 meq/g.

Suitable organic functionalizing hydrophobisation agents are derived from oxonium, ammonium, phosphonium and sulfonium ions, which may carry one or more organic residues.

As suitable functionalizing hydrophobisation agents those of general formula I and/or II are mentioned:



Where the substituents have the following meaning:

R₁, R₂, R₃, R₄ are independently from each other hydrogen, a straight chain, branched, saturated or unsaturated hydrocarbon radical with 1 to 40, preferably 1 to 20 C atoms, optionally carrying at least one functional group or 2 of the radicals are linked with each other, preferably to a heterocyclic residue having 5 to 10 C atoms, more preferably having one or more N atoms.

X represents phosphorous or nitrogen,

Y represents oxygen or sulfur,

n is an integer from 1 to 5, preferably 1 to 3 and

Z is an anion.

Suitable functional groups are hydroxyl, nitro or sulfo groups, whereas carboxyl or sulfonic acid groups are especially preferred. In the same way sulfochloride and carboxylic acid chloride groups are especially preferred.

Suitable anions Z are derived from proton delivering acids, in particular mineral acids, wherein halogens such as chlorine, bromine, fluorine, iodine, sulfate, sulfonate, phosphate, phosphonate, phosphite and carboxylate, especially acetate are preferred. The phyllosilicates used as starting materials are generally reacted as a suspension. The preferred suspending agent is water, optionally mixed with alcohols, especially

lower alcohols having 1 to 3 carbon atoms. If the functionalizing hydrophobisation agent is not water-soluble, then a solvent is preferred in which said agent is soluble. In such cases, this is especially an aprotic solvent. Further examples for suspending agents are ketones and hydrocarbons. Usually a suspending agent miscible with water is preferred. On addition of the hydrophobizing agent to the phyllosilicate, ion exchange occurs whereby the phyllosilicate usually precipitates from the solution. The metal salt resulting as a by-product of the ion exchange is preferably water-soluble, so that the hydrophobized phyllosilicate can be separated as a crystalline solid, for example, by filtration.

The ion exchange is mostly independent from the reaction temperature. The temperature is preferably above the crystallization point of the medium and below the boiling point thereof. For aqueous systems the temperature is between 0 and 100°C, preferably between 40 and 80°C.

For a cation and anion exchange polymer alkylammonium ions are preferred, in particular if as a functional group additionally a carboxylic acid chloride or sulfonic acid chloride is present in the same molecule. The alkylammonium ions can be obtained via usual methylation reagents such as methyl iodide. Suitable ammonium ions are omega-aminocarboxylic acids, especially preferred are omega-aminosulfonic acids and omega-alkylaminosulfonic acids. Omega-aminosulfonic acids and omega-alkylaminosulfonic acids can be obtained with usual mineral acids, for example hydrochloric acid, sulfuric acid or phosphoric acid or by methylation reagents such as methyl iodide.

Additional preferred ammonium ions are pyridine and laurylammonium ions. After hydrophobizing the layer distance of the phyllosilicates is in general between 10 and 50 angstrom, preferably 13 and 40 angstrom.

The hydrophobized and functionalized phyllosilicate is freed of water by drying. In general a thus treated phyllosilicate still contains a residual water content of 0-5 weight % of water. Subsequently the hydrophobized phyllosilicate can be mixed in form of a suspension in a suspending agent which is free as much as possible from water with the mentioned polymers and be further processed. According to the invention the polymers, especially preferably the thermoplastic functionalized polymers (ionomers) are added to the suspension of the hydrophobized phyllosilicates. This can be done using already dissolved polymers or the polymers are dissolved in the suspension itself. Preferably the ratio of the phyllosilicates is between 1 and 70 weight %, more preferably between 2 and 40 weight % and most preferably between 5 and 15 weight %.

Process for producing the composite

The present invention concerns furthermore a process for producing composite membranes. In the following process examples to produce proton conducting composites having high proton conductivity are described.

- 1) An aminoarylsulfochloride is dissolved in tetrahydrofuran. Then a corresponding quantity of montmorillonite K10 is added. The montmorillonite is proton exchanged and dried. Then stirring for several hours follows. The time of stirring depends on the molecular size of the aminoarylsulfochloride

and the ratio of the amino group to the cation exchange capacity of the montmorillonite. During the stirring process the amino group intercalates into the cavities of the montmorillonite. To the suspension sulfochlorinated polysulfone dissolved in tetrahydrofuran is then added. The sulfochloride content of the thermoplastic is approximately 0.5 groups per repeating unit. The suspension is stirred, gently degassed and knife-coated into a film on a glass plate. The tetrahydrofuran is evaporated at room temperature. The content of montmorillonite is chosen to be between 5 and 10 weight % of the added sulfochlorinated polysulfone. Once the film is totally dried the film is peeled off in deionised water and cured in 10% hydrochloric acid at 90°C. Hereby the sulfochloride groups are hydrolyzed and reacted to sulfonic acid groups. The resulting membrane is additionally cured in water of 80-90°C until hydrochloric acid is no longer detectable.

A sulfochlorinated polysulfone having 0,5 SO₂Cl groups per repeating unit corresponds after hydrolysis to a cation exchange capacity of 1,0 milliequivalent per gram. Due to the additional sulfonic acid groups from the aminoarylsulfochloride the cation exchange capacity increases remarkably corresponding to the quantity thereof and is not water-soluble. At the same cation exchange capacity exclusively sulfonated polysulfone is water-soluble.

2) Sulfonated polyetheretherketone having a cation exchange capacity (IEC) of 0.9 milliequivalent per gram is dissolved in hot (T>80°C) N-methylpyrrolidone (NMP). The sulfochlorinated form having such a content is not soluble in THF. Polymeric sulfonic acids and their salts are not or only to a very small extent soluble in THF. To this solution a suspension of

montmorillonite K10, loaded with an aminosulfonic acid, in NMP is then added. Herein the sulfonic acid groups are present on the surface, whereas the amino groups are in the cavities of the montmorillonite. The composition of the suspension is again chosen for a solid content to be between 2 and 20 weight % of the polymer content. It depends on the application for which the membrane is used. The suspension is processed to a membrane as above. The solvent is evaporated in a drying board at a temperature between 80°C and 150°C. The membrane is peeled off from the glass plate and cured in deionized water for 12 hours at 90°C.

3) Sulfochlorinated polysulfone and aminated polysulfone are dissolved in THF. Then 10 weight % of montmorillonite K10 (dried and in protonated form) is added. The suspension is stirred, degassed and processed to a membrane as above. The membrane is peeled off from the glass plate and then cured in diluted HCl at 80°C, whereby the sulfochloride group is rehydrolyzed to the sulfonic acid. Then the membrane is again further treated with deionized water until all the hydrochloric acid is removed from the membrane.

It has now been found that the composites relating to the invention have surprising properties:

- The composites have excellent ionic conductivities even at temperatures far beyond 100°C. Especially the proton conductivities of the composites are still excellent in this temperature range due to on one hand the water storing properties of the clay materials and on the other hand the self-proton conducting properties of the clay materials. The good proton conductivities permit the use of these composites in membrane fuel cells in the above mentioned temperature range.

- Due to the silicates forming cavities the chemical, mechanical and thermal stability of composite membranes is significantly increased, because the polymer molecules and the clay minerals and zeolites, respectively, can interact with each other in the cavities. Especially ionomer blends containing basic polymers and base polymer components may intercalate into the Lewis acid cavities of the silicates due to the interaction of the base groups, whereby an ionic cross-linking between the acidic silicate and the basic polymer chain is formed, which depending on the system may be pH independent contributing to an increase in mechanical, chemical and thermal stability, in particular if the composite membranes are used in a strongly acidic or alkaline medium.
- Used in DMFC the composite membranes relating to the invention show a reduced methanol permeability and gas-through-diffusion across the membrane. Therein the methanol permeability and the permselectivity of the membrane can be fine tuned at will by :
 - The kind of phyllosilicate / tectosilicate
 - The mass percentage of the silicate in the composite
 - Targeted incorporation of spacer molecules and bifunctional molecules into the silicate cavities. The kind and strength of the interaction of the spacer molecules with the permeate molecules hereby depends on the kind of their functional groups facing outwards and the kind of the functional groups of the permeate molecules. For example, an aminosulfonic acid or an amino carboxylic acid is coupled with the amine function in exchange of alkali-bentonite on the bentonite surface. The second functional group is available for the reaction with polymers or for proton transport in electromembrane processes.

- The membranes according to the invention show a strongly decreased fouling (microbial attack of the ionomer membranes by fungi and bacteria) in comparison to conventional ionomer membranes, and this already at a content of 2-5% of silicate (montmorillonite) in the ionomer membrane. This property is due to the clay minerals blended with the composite. It has been known for long that clay minerals may act as soil improving agent by strongly slowing down the microbial degradation, especially by fungi. It is surprising that this property of clay minerals is also shown in membranes which contain clay minerals. Due to this property of the composites according to the invention their use in membrane separation processes in water and waste water applications is possible and also in any other oxidizing environment, containing e.g. hydroxy radicals and/or hydrogen peroxide.
- The catalytic properties of the silicate Lewis acids, from which the clay minerals according to the invention are made, can also be used in the composites according to the invention.

Examples for applications

1. Sulfonated polyetheretherketone (sulfonation degree 70%) is dissolved with 5 weight % of montmorillonite in DMAc and knife-coated to a membrane of 50 μm thickness after evaporation of the solvent. This membrane is put into an aqueous medium contaminated with fungi. No attack by fungi is identified. The blank without montmorillonite is heavily colonized and attacked.
2. a) Sulfonated polysulfone in salt form and polyvinylpyridine is blended in such a ratio that the final capacity is 1 milli equivalent $[\text{H}^+]$ per gram of the total

blend. Both polymers are dissolved in DMAc and processed to a membrane. The specific resistance of this membrane is 33 [ohm x cm].

b) To an identical blend as in 2.a) additionally 8 weight % of activated montmorillonite is added and the blend obtained is processed to a membrane as in 2.a). The specific resistance is 27,7 [ohm x cm].

3. Polybenzimidazole dissolved in DMAc is mixed with 10 weight % of activated montmorillonite and as a blank without the phyllosilicate. Either blend is processed to a membrane and the resistances are measured by impedance spectroscopy. Without the phyllosilicate the resistance is 588 [ohm x cm], with the phyllosilicate 276 [ohm x cm].

CLAIMS:

1. An ion conducting composite comprising: (A) a polymer; (B) an acid-base component comprising an acid and a base and (C) a phyllosilicate, tectosilicate, or both, wherein components (A) and (B) are combined into the polymer thereby providing an acidic group and a basic group on the polymer, wherein the sum of the amounts of the acid-base component and the polymer are from 1 to 99 weight % and the amount of phyllosilicate or tectosilicate is from 99 to 1 weight %, and wherein the basic group is intercalated into the phyllosilicate or tectosilicate.
2. The composite of claim 1, wherein an ionomer provides both components (A) and (B), wherein the ionomer is selected from the group consisting of:
 - (a) a cation exchange polymer comprising a cation exchange group --SO₃H, --COOH, and/or --PO₃H₂, wherein the polymer can be non-cross-linked or covalently crosslinked and the polymer backbone can be a vinyl polymer, an aryl main chain polymer, polythiazole, polypyrazole, polypyrrole, polyaniline, polythiophene or any blend of these;
 - (b) an anion exchange polymer comprising an anion exchange group -NR₃⁺, PyrH⁺, ImR⁺, PyrazR⁺, TriR⁺ and/or other organic basic aromatic and/or non-aromatic groups, wherein R is a hydrogen, alkyl, or aryl group, wherein the polymer is non-cross-linked or covalently crosslinked, and wherein the polymer comprises a vinyl polymer, an aryl main chain polymer, polythiazole, polypyrazole, polypyrrole, polyaniline, polythiophene, or a blend thereof,
 - (c) a polymer containing on the polymer chain both anion exchange groups from (b) and cation exchange groups from (a), wherein the polymer comprises a vinyl polymer, an aryl main chain polymer, polythiazole, polypyrazole, polypyrrole, polyaniline, polythiophene, or a blend thereof; or
 - (d) a blend of (a) and (b), wherein the mixing ratio can range from up to

less than 100% of (a) to up to less than 100% of (b), wherein the blend is covalently and ionically cross-linked, and wherein the polymer comprises a vinyl polymer, an aryl main chain polymer, polythiazole, polypyrazole, polypyrrole, polyaniline, polythiophene, or a blend thereof.

3. The composite of claim 1, wherein a precursor of an ionomer provides both components (A) and (B), wherein the precursor is selected from the group consisting of:

(a) the precursor of: a cation exchange polymer (a1) comprising COHal , CONR_2 , or COOR groups; a cation exchange polymer (a2) comprising SO_2Hal , SO_2NR_2 , or SO_2OR groups; or a cation exchange polymer (a3) comprising PO_3Hal_2 , $\text{PO}_3(\text{NR}_2)_2$, or $\text{PO}_3(\text{OR})_2$, groups, wherein R is a hydrogen, alkyl, or aryl group, and wherein Hal is a fluorine, chlorine, bromine, or iodine atom; or

(b) the precursor of an anion exchange polymer comprising $-\text{NR}_2$, pyridyl, imidazolyl, pyrazolyl, triazolyl, and/or other organic basic aromatic and/or non-aromatic groups, wherein R is a hydrogen, alkyl, or aryl group, and wherein Hal is a fluorine, chlorine, bromine, or iodine atom.

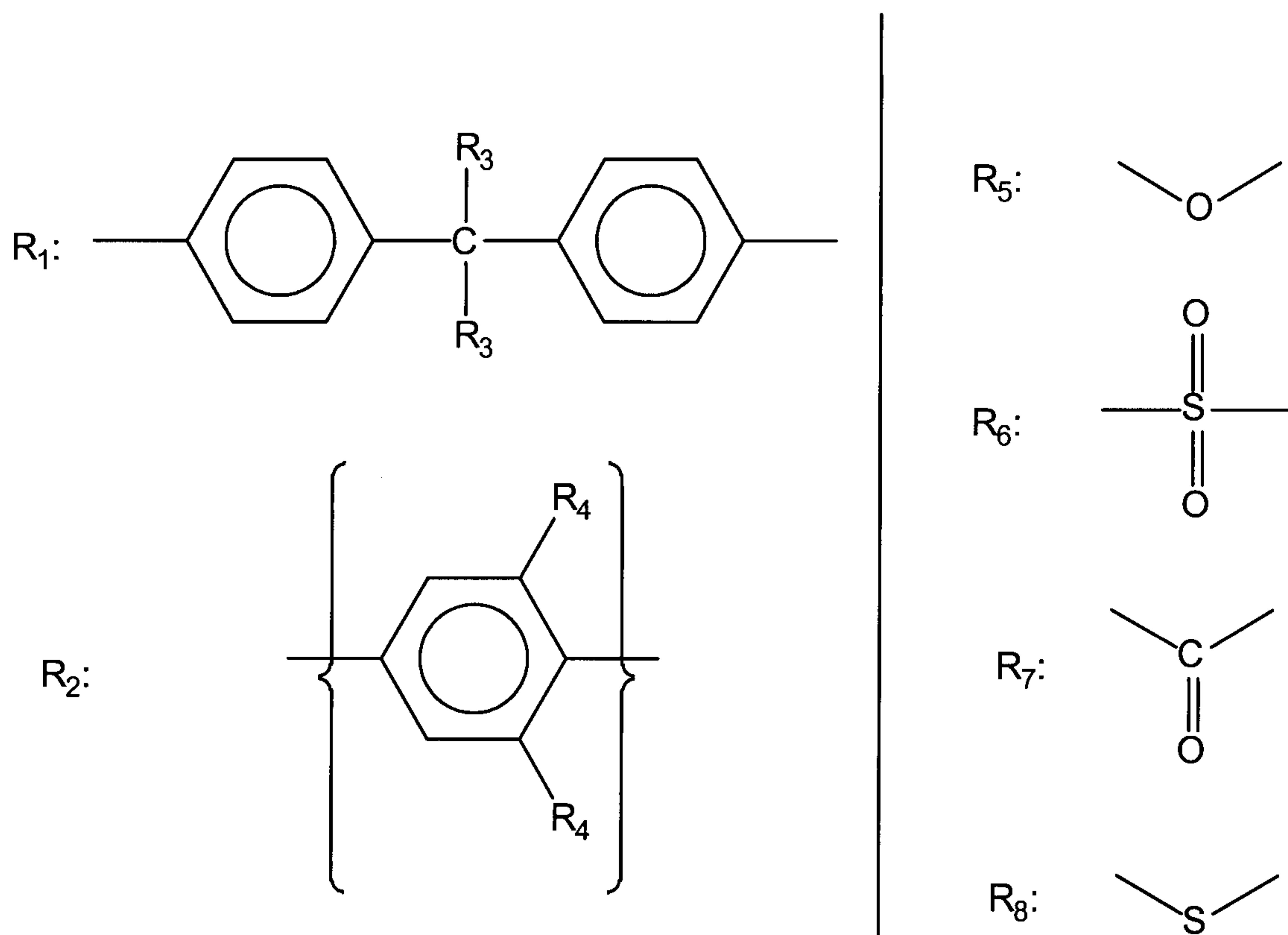
4. The composite of claim 1, wherein the phyllosilicate is a bentonite.
5. The composite of claim 4, wherein the bentonite is a montmorillonite.
6. The composite of claim 1, wherein the phyllosilicate is a pillared phyllosilicate.
7. The composite of claim 1, wherein the tectosilicate is a zeolite.
8. The composite of claim 1, wherein the tectosilicate is a clinoptilolite.
9. The composite of claim 2, characterized in that the basic component

contains imidazole, vinylimidazole, pyrazole, oxazole, carbazole, indole, isoindole, dihydrooxazole, isooxazole, thiazole, benzothiazole, isothiazole, benzoimidazole, imidazolidine, indazole, 4,5-dihydropyrazole, 1,2,3-oxadiazole, furazane, 1,2,3-thiadiazole, 1,2,4-thiadiazole, 1,2,3-benzo-triazole, 1,2,4-triazole, tetrazole, pyrrole, aniline, pyrrolidine, or pyrazole groups.

10. The composite of claim 2, wherein the ionomer is an ionomer blend (d), and wherein the phyllosilicate is montmorillonite.

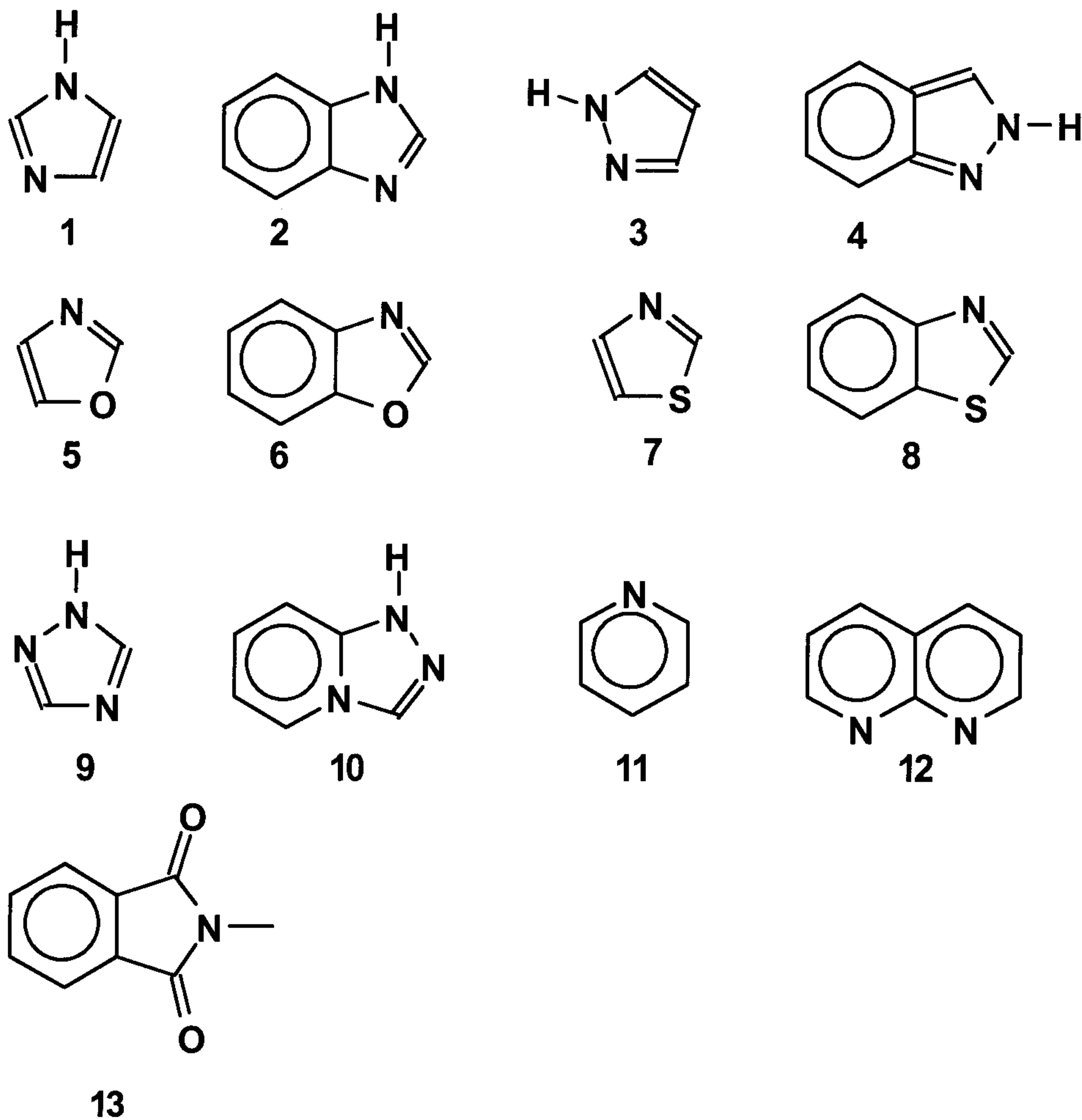
11. The composite of claim 2, wherein the ionomer is an ionomer blend (d), and wherein the tectosilicate is clinoptilolite.

12. The composite of claim 3, wherein the polymer component (A) comprises an acid polymer, and wherein the backbone of the polymer comprises one or more of the following repeat units:



R₃ and R₄: Hydrogen, Alkyl or Aryl

13. The composite of claim 1, wherein the polymer component (A) is a basic polymer, and wherein the backbone of the polymer comprises one or more of the repeat units of claim 12 or comprises one or more of the following repeat units:



14. The composite of claim 1, wherein components (A) and (B) are combined into 1) a polymer comprising an acidic group and 2) a polymer comprising a basic group, and wherein both polymers are incorporated into the composites.

15. The composite of claim 1, wherein the composite maintains ion conduction over the temperature range of from -40°C to 200°C.

16. The composite of claim 15 adapted to be a component of a fuel cell.

17. The composite of claim 1 adapted to be a reverse osmosis or (electro)membrane, wherein the membrane is capable of separating two or more gases or liquids.

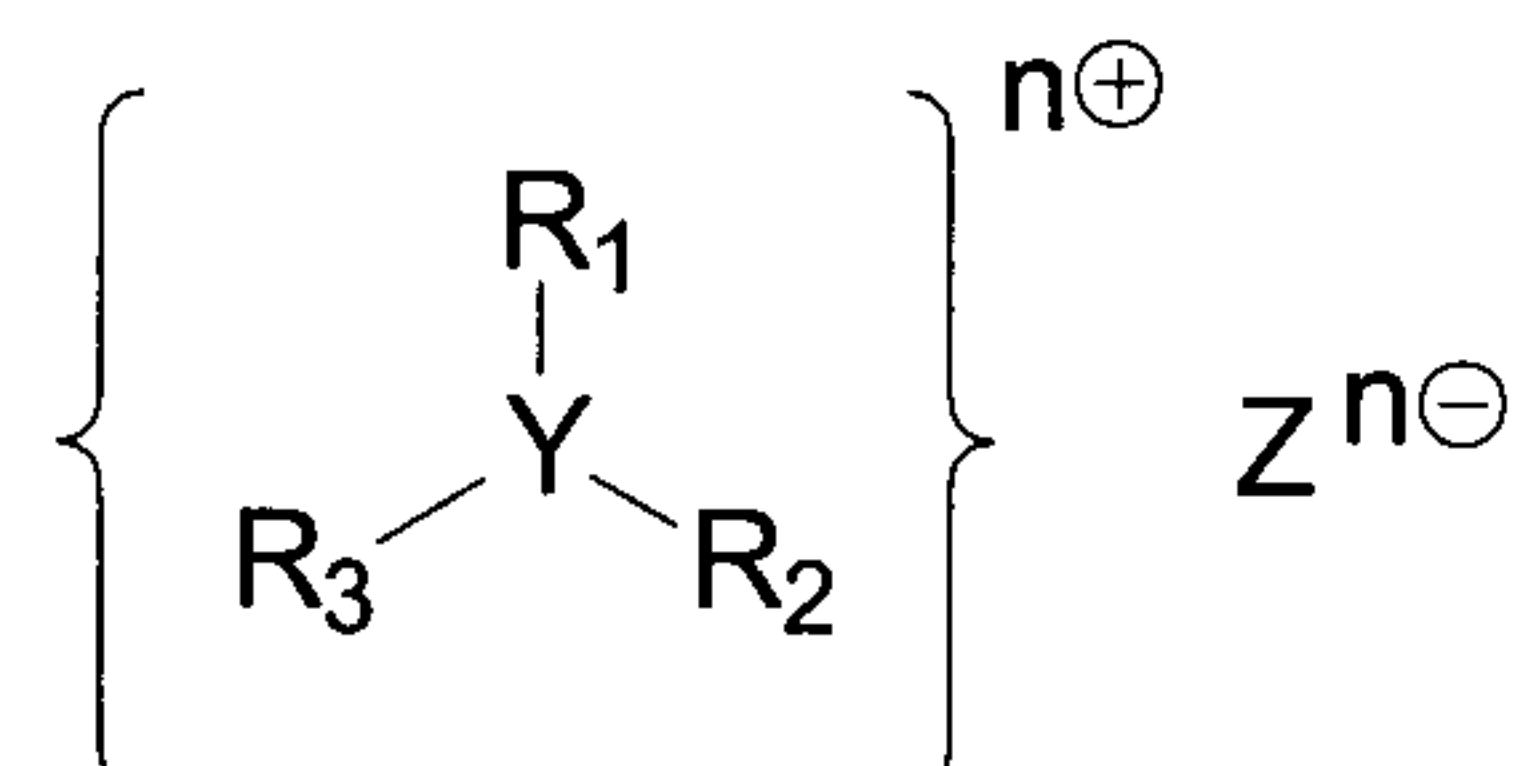
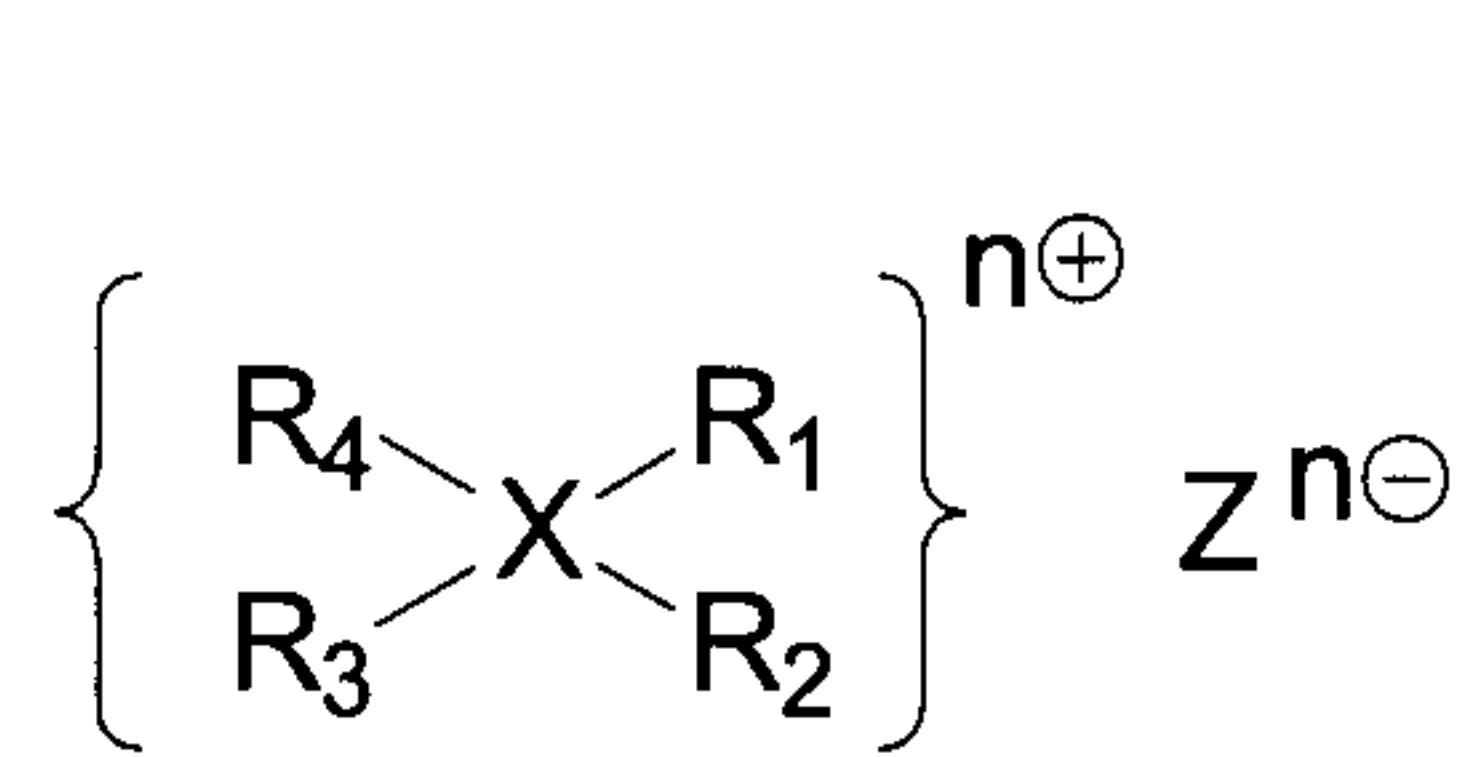
18. The composite of claim 1 adapted to be a catalytic membrane or a component of a membrane reactor.

19. The composite according to claim 1, further exhibiting thermal resistance up to 400°C.

20. A process for the preparation of the composite of claim 1, comprising the step of contacting the polymer component, the acid-base component, and the phyllosilicate and/or tectosilicate component, optionally with a solvent, at a temperature from -40°C to 300°C.

21. Composite according to any one of claims 1 to 19, characterized in that it contains functionalized phyllosilicates and/or tectosilicates with functionalizing hydrophobisation agents.

22. Composite according to claim 21, characterized in that the phyllosilicates and/or tectosilicates contain functionalizing hydrophobisation agents having the general formula I and/or II:



I

II

and wherein the substituents are characterized in that R1, R2, R3, R4 independently of each other represent hydrogen, a straight chain branched, saturated or nonsaturated hydrocarbon radical with 1 to 40 C atoms, which if necessary carries at least a functional group or 2 of the radicals are linked together, and in which,

X represents phosphorus or nitrogen,

Y represents oxygen or sulphur,

n is an integer number from 1 to 5 and

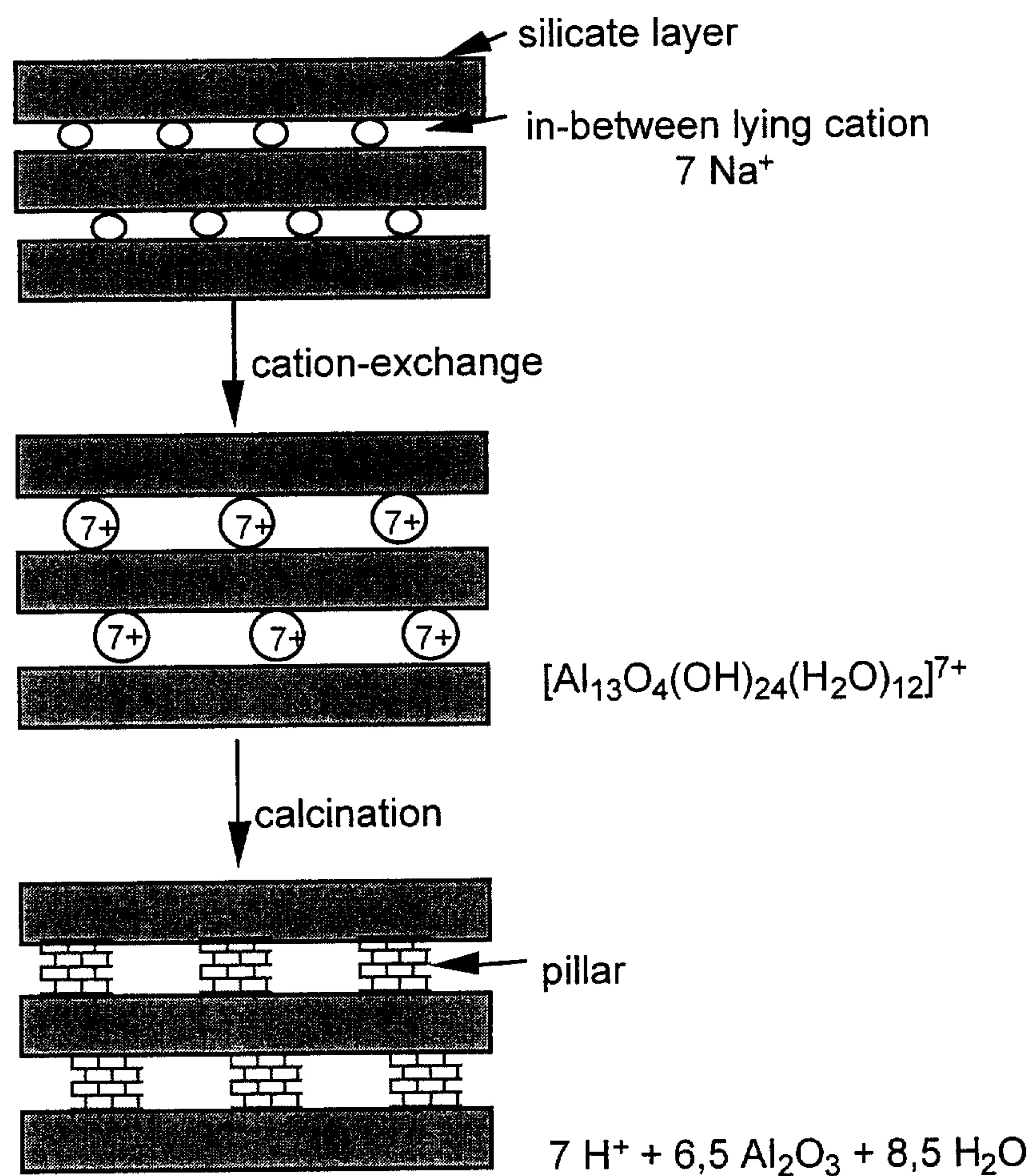
Z is an anion.

23. Composite according to any one of claims 1 to 19, 21, 22 characterized in that the ion exchange capacity of the cation exchange polymer comprises between 0.1 and 12 meq/g, and that the ion exchange capacity of the anion exchange polymer comprised between 1 and 15 meq/g related to the total mass of the composite.

24. Composite according to any one of claims 1 to 19, 21 to 23 characterized in that the composite contains phosphoric acid.

25. Composite according to any one of claims 1 to 19, 21 to 24 for the use in membrane and membrane processes.

Drawing 1/1



Keywords

polymeric proton conductor, inorganic-organic composites, phyllosilicates, tectosilicates, membrane fuel cells, direct methanol fuel cells, water balance, silicate component as water reservoir, polymeric acids, cation exchange polymer, polymeric bases, functionalized silicates.