## Accepted Manuscript

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PII: S0266-3538(17)33004-X

DOI: 10.1016/j.compscitech.2018.04.018

Reference: CSTE 7180

To appear in: Composites Science and Technology

Received Date: 25 November 2017

Revised Date: 16 March 2018

Accepted Date: 12 April 2018

Please cite this article as: Wu H, Wu X, Wu Q, Yan W, High performance proton-conducting composite based on vanadium-substituted Dawson-type heteropoly acid for proton exchange membranes, *Composites Science and Technology* (2018), doi: 10.1016/j.compscitech.2018.04.018.

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High performance proton-conducting composite based on vanadium-substituted Dawson-type heteropoly acid for proton exchange membranes

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**Abstract:** Proton exchange membranes (PEMs) are the key parts in proton exchange membrane fuel cells (PEMFCs). In this work, a proton-conducting composite membrane rGO-P<sub>2</sub>W<sub>16</sub>V<sub>2</sub>@SPEEK was synthesized from vanadium-substituted Dawson-type heteropoly acid (H<sub>8</sub>P<sub>2</sub>W<sub>16</sub>V<sub>2</sub>O<sub>62</sub>•20H<sub>2</sub>O, abbreviated as P<sub>2</sub>W<sub>16</sub>V<sub>2</sub>), sulfonated polyether ether ketone (SPEEK) and reduced graphene oxide (rGO). Characterizations proved the integrity of the Dawson-structure heteropoly acids (HPAs) in composites and the uniform inorganic-organic hybrid distribution. The membrane shows excellent proton conductivity of  $7.90 \times 10^{-2}$  S•cm<sup>-1</sup> at 50°C and the proton conduction was proved to comply with the Grotthuss mechanism. Up to now, this is the first time that a Dawson-type HPA was reported for the application of PEMs and this work extended the application of polyoxometalate-based materials in the field of fuel cells.

*Keywords:* Heteropoly acid; Proton exchange membrane; Graphene; Polymer-matrix composites (PMCs); Electrical properties;

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