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# Surfactant-assisted solid-state synthesis of $6\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4 \cdot \text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3/\text{C}$ nanocomposite for lithium-ion batteries

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Herein, nanosized  $\text{LiMnPO}_4/\text{C}$ ,  $\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4/\text{C}$ , and  $6\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4 \cdot \text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3/\text{C}$  cathode materials were synthesized by a facile surfactant-assisted solid-state method. Lauric acid was used as a surfactant and carbon source to fabricate the carbon-coated nanoparticles. The phase compositions and elemental distribution of  $6\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4 \cdot \text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3/\text{C}$  were analyzed via X-ray diffraction and energy dispersive spectroscopy. Due to the unique heterogeneous nanostructure,  $6\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4 \cdot \text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3/\text{C}$  exhibits superior electrochemical performance as compared to the individual  $\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4/\text{C}$  and  $\text{LiMnPO}_4/\text{C}$ . The composite cathode delivers large discharge capacities of 162 and 167  $\text{mA h g}^{-1}$  at 0.1C in the voltage range of 2.0–4.5 V and 2.0–4.8 V, respectively, along with good rate capability and long cycle life.

## 1. Introduction

During the recent decade, the rapidly developing electric vehicles and hybrid electric vehicles urgently need safe lithium-ion batteries as a driving power source. Compared to commercial metal-oxide cathode materials, polyanionic  $\text{LiMPO}_4$  ( $\text{M} = \text{Fe}, \text{Mn}, \text{and Co}$ ) cathodes exhibit superior structural and thermal stability due to the existence of strong covalent P–O bonds.<sup>1,2</sup>  $\text{LiMnPO}_4$  shows great potential for application in power batteries owing to the virtues of large theoretical capacity (171  $\text{mA h g}^{-1}$ ), high discharge voltage (4.1 V vs.  $\text{Li}/\text{Li}^+$ ), and an abundant manganese source.<sup>3</sup> However, the low electronic conductivity of  $\text{LiMnPO}_4$  ( $<10^{-10} \text{ S cm}^{-1}$ ) restricts its reversible capacity at high currents.<sup>4</sup>

Recent reports have proven that the electrochemical kinetics of  $\text{LiMnPO}_4$  can be remarkably improved by partially replacing Mn with Fe.<sup>5–26</sup> Various  $\text{LiMn}_{1-y}\text{Fe}_y\text{PO}_4$  ( $0 < y < 1$ ) solid solutions, such as  $\text{LiMn}_{0.9}\text{Fe}_{0.1}\text{PO}_4$ ,<sup>11,12</sup>  $\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4$ ,<sup>13–16</sup>  $\text{LiMn}_{0.6}\text{Fe}_{0.4}\text{PO}_4$ ,<sup>17–19</sup>  $\text{LiMn}_{0.5}\text{Fe}_{0.5}\text{PO}_4$ ,<sup>20</sup>  $\text{LiMn}_{0.4}\text{Fe}_{0.6}\text{PO}_4$ ,<sup>21–23</sup> etc., exhibit much better electrochemical performance than the pristine  $\text{LiMnPO}_4$ . Yang *et al.*<sup>24</sup> synthesized a  $\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4/\text{C}$  composite using a co-precipitation method, which provided a specific capacity of 160.6  $\text{mA h g}^{-1}$  at 0.05C. Xiang *et al.*<sup>25</sup> reported the template-engaged synthesis of  $\text{LiMn}_{0.5}\text{Fe}_{0.5}\text{PO}_4/\text{C}$  porous spheres, and the spheres exhibited capacity retention of 90.7% over 100 cycles at 1C. In general, the reversible capacity of  $\text{LiFe}_y\text{Mn}_{1-y}\text{PO}_4$  increases with an increase in the Fe content. However, high Fe content reduces the energy density of

$\text{LiFe}_y\text{Mn}_{1-y}\text{PO}_4$  due to the relatively low redox potential of  $\text{Fe}^{3+}/\text{Fe}^{2+}$  (3.5 V vs.  $\text{Li}/\text{Li}^+$ ). More recently, the reported multiphase composites of  $x\text{LiFePO}_4 \cdot y\text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3$  and  $x\text{LiMnPO}_4 \cdot y\text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3$  presented superior rate capability than individual  $\text{LiFePO}_4$  and  $\text{LiMnPO}_4$ , respectively.<sup>26–30</sup> The electrochemical activity of  $\text{LiFePO}_4$  and  $\text{LiMnPO}_4$  can be obviously enhanced by blending with the fast ion conductor  $\text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3$ .<sup>31–33</sup> For example, Qin *et al.*<sup>34</sup> prepared  $(1-x)\text{LiMnPO}_4 \cdot x\text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3/\text{C}$  composites through a solid-state method, and  $0.6\text{LiMnPO}_4 \cdot 0.4\text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3/\text{C}$  showed much larger capacity of 130  $\text{mA h g}^{-1}$  at 0.1C than 76  $\text{mA h g}^{-1}$  of pristine  $\text{LiMnPO}_4/\text{C}$ . According to the abovementioned studies, a novel strategy of combining the advantages of a solid solution and multiphase composite was proposed to prepare high-performance  $\text{LiMnPO}_4$ -based composite cathode materials.<sup>35</sup> Wu *et al.*<sup>36</sup> reported the synthesis of  $5\text{LiMn}_{0.9}\text{Fe}_{0.1}\text{PO}_4 \cdot \text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3/\text{C}$ , which showed satisfactory performance with the specific capacity of 158  $\text{mA h g}^{-1}$  at 0.05C as compared to 70  $\text{mA h g}^{-1}$  of  $\text{LiMn}_{0.9}\text{Fe}_{0.1}\text{PO}_4/\text{C}$ . Although  $\text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3$  is a fast rate cathode for rechargeable lithium batteries, the theoretical capacity of 133  $\text{mA h g}^{-1}$  while charging to 4.3 V is relatively lower. Furthermore, the cost of V is much higher than that of Mn or Fe; thus, the high cost of  $\text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3$  restricts its large-scale application in power batteries. Based on the cost and performance of the cathode material,  $\text{LiMn}_{1-y}\text{Fe}_y\text{PO}_4$  incorporated with a small quantity of  $\text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3$  may be a feasible choice.

The simple solid-state reaction method has been widely employed in industry to prepare various cathode materials for lithium batteries. However, the nanoparticles tend to aggregate and grow further during the high-temperature calcination. The big particle size usually causes slow lithium ion diffusion in the polyanionic cathode materials. To synthesize high dispersing nanoparticles using a solid-state reaction, several surfactants,

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such as oleic acid,<sup>37,38</sup> poly(acrylic acid),<sup>39</sup> Tween,<sup>40</sup> Span,<sup>41</sup> *etc.*, have been introduced to suppress the particle growth and aggregation. In this study, we described a facile solid-state synthesis of  $6\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4 \cdot \text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3/\text{C}$  nanocomposites using lauric acid as a surfactant and carbon source. Moreover, physical characterization and electrochemical properties of  $6\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4 \cdot \text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3/\text{C}$  were studied in detail.

## 2. Experimental

Stoichiometric amounts of  $\text{Li}_2\text{CO}_3$ ,  $\text{Mn}(\text{CH}_3\text{COO})_2 \cdot 4\text{H}_2\text{O}$ ,  $\text{FeC}_2\text{O}_4$ ,  $\text{NH}_4\text{VO}_3$ ,  $\text{NH}_4\text{H}_2\text{PO}_4$ , and lauric acid were mixed with ethanol media and ball-milled in a zirconia container at 400 rpm for 5 h. The molar ratio of Li/lauric acid was 1 : 2.5. The obtained precursor mixture was pre-decomposed at 350 °C for 4 h and subsequently heated at 700 °C under an Ar/H<sub>2</sub> atmosphere (7% H<sub>2</sub>) for 10 h to yield the  $6\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4 \cdot \text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3/\text{C}$  composite. For comparison, the  $\text{LiMnPO}_4/\text{C}$  and  $\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4/\text{C}$  composites were synthesized in a similar manner.  $\text{LiMnPO}_4/\text{C}$ ,  $\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4/\text{C}$ , and  $6\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4 \cdot \text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3/\text{C}$  have been abbreviated as LMP/C, LMFP/C, and 6LMFP·LVP/C, respectively.

The phase structure was determined using a powder X-ray diffractometer (XRD, Rigaku D/max-2550VL/PC, Cu K $\alpha$  radiation), operating at 40 kV and 200 mA. The morphology, carbon layer, and elemental distribution of the as-synthesized composites were characterized by scanning electron microscopy (SEM, Hitachi-SU8020) and high-resolution transmission electron microscopy (HRTEM, JEOL-2100F) equipped with an energy dispersive X-ray spectroscopy (EDS). The carbon amounts of all the composites were evaluated by an elemental analyzer (Vario EL Cube). The chemical composition of the cathode material was analyzed *via* inductively coupled plasma atomic emission spectroscopy (ICP, iCAP 7600).

The electrochemical properties of the LMP/C, LMFP/C, and 6LMFP·LVP/C composites were studied using coin cells with lithium-foil as the anode and Entek ET20-26 membrane as the separator. The cathode consisted of 80 wt% active composite, 10 wt% Super P conducting carbon, and 10 wt% poly(vinylidene fluoride). A 1 M solution of  $\text{LiPF}_6$  in the mixed solvents of ethylene carbonate and dimethyl carbonate (1 : 1, v/v) acted as the electrolyte. The charge–discharge measurements were performed using a battery testing system (LANHE CT2001) in the voltage range of 2.0–4.5 V and 2.0–4.8 V, respectively. The elevated temperature performance of 6LMFP·LVP/C was also determined at 50 °C. The cyclic voltammogram (CV) and electrochemical impedance spectra (EIS) were obtained using an electrochemical analyzer (CHI 650D).

## 3. Results and discussion

Fig. 1 presents the XRD patterns of the as-synthesized composites and Rietveld refinement of 6LMFP·LVP/C. The sharp diffraction peaks of LMP/C can be fully assigned to the olivine-type crystal structure with the *Pnmb* space group (JCPDS no. 74-0375). Moreover, the diffraction peaks of LMFP/C are similar to those of LMP/C without any indefinite peak,

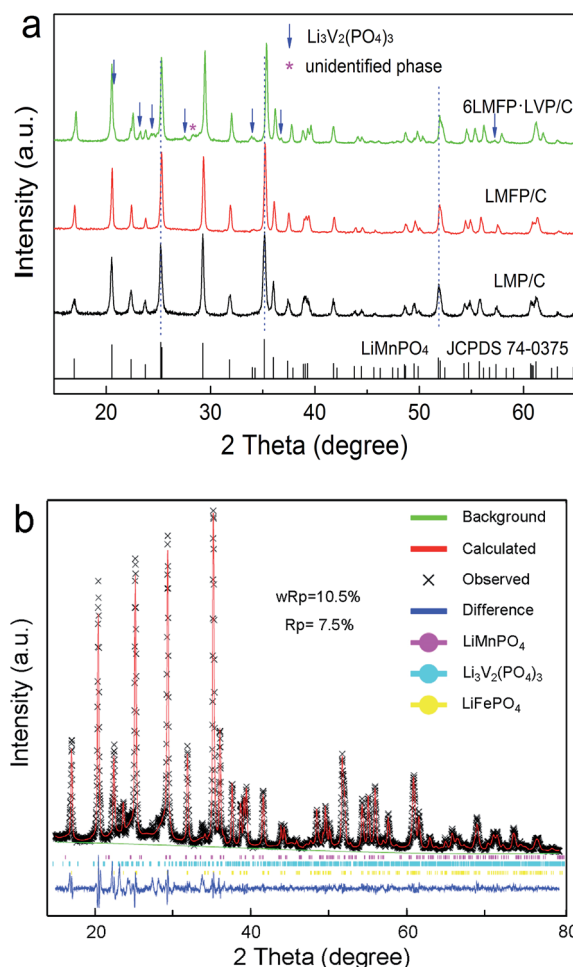


Fig. 1 XRD patterns of the as-synthesized composites (a) and Rietveld refinement of 6LMFP·LVP/C (b).

indicating the pure solid solution phase of  $\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4$ . Both the  $\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4$  and  $\text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3$  phases were observed in the 6LMFP·LVP/C composite with a small unidentified phase at 28.3°. The diffraction peaks of LMFP/C and 6LMFP·LVP/C slightly shifted to higher  $2\theta$  angles relative to those of LMP/C, which may be attributed to the smaller ionic radius of  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$  (0.78 Å) and  $\text{V}^{3+}$  (0.74 Å) than that of  $\text{Mn}^{2+}$  (0.80 Å). The lattice parameters of the olivine phase in LMP/C, LMFP/C, and 6LMFP·LVP/C composites, analyzed *via* Rietveld refinement, are compared in Table 1. The cell volume of  $\text{LiMnPO}_4$  decreases when Fe is introduced, and it further decreases when  $\text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3$  is incorporated, which indicates that some Fe and V diffuse into the  $\text{LiMnPO}_4$  host lattice. Previous studies have revealed that doping  $\text{LiMnPO}_4$  with  $\text{Fe}^{2+}$  and  $\text{V}^{3+}$  could improve the electronic and electrochemical kinetics.<sup>5,31,32</sup>

Table 1 Lattice parameters of the olivine phase in the composites

Sample	<i>a</i> (Å)	<i>b</i> (Å)	<i>c</i> (Å)	Volume (Å <sup>3</sup> )
LMP	6.0942	10.4358	4.7487	302.01
LMFP	6.0671	10.4262	4.7358	299.57
6LMFP·LVP	6.0558	10.4168	4.7273	298.21



Fig. 2a–c show the SEM images of the LMP/C, LMFP/C, and 6LMFP·LVP/C powders. All the samples illustrate similar nanoparticles morphology with the size of *ca.* 100–150 nm and narrow distribution. The TEM images (Fig. 2d and e) exhibit that the well-dispersed 6LMFP·LVP/C granules are

interconnected by the amorphous carbon layer rather than agglomerated into larger blocks. A homogenous carbon layer formed from the pyrolysis of lauric acid is tightly coated on the surface of the 6LMFP·LVP nanoparticles in a thickness of *ca.* 3 nm. The carbon contents evaluated by elemental analysis are

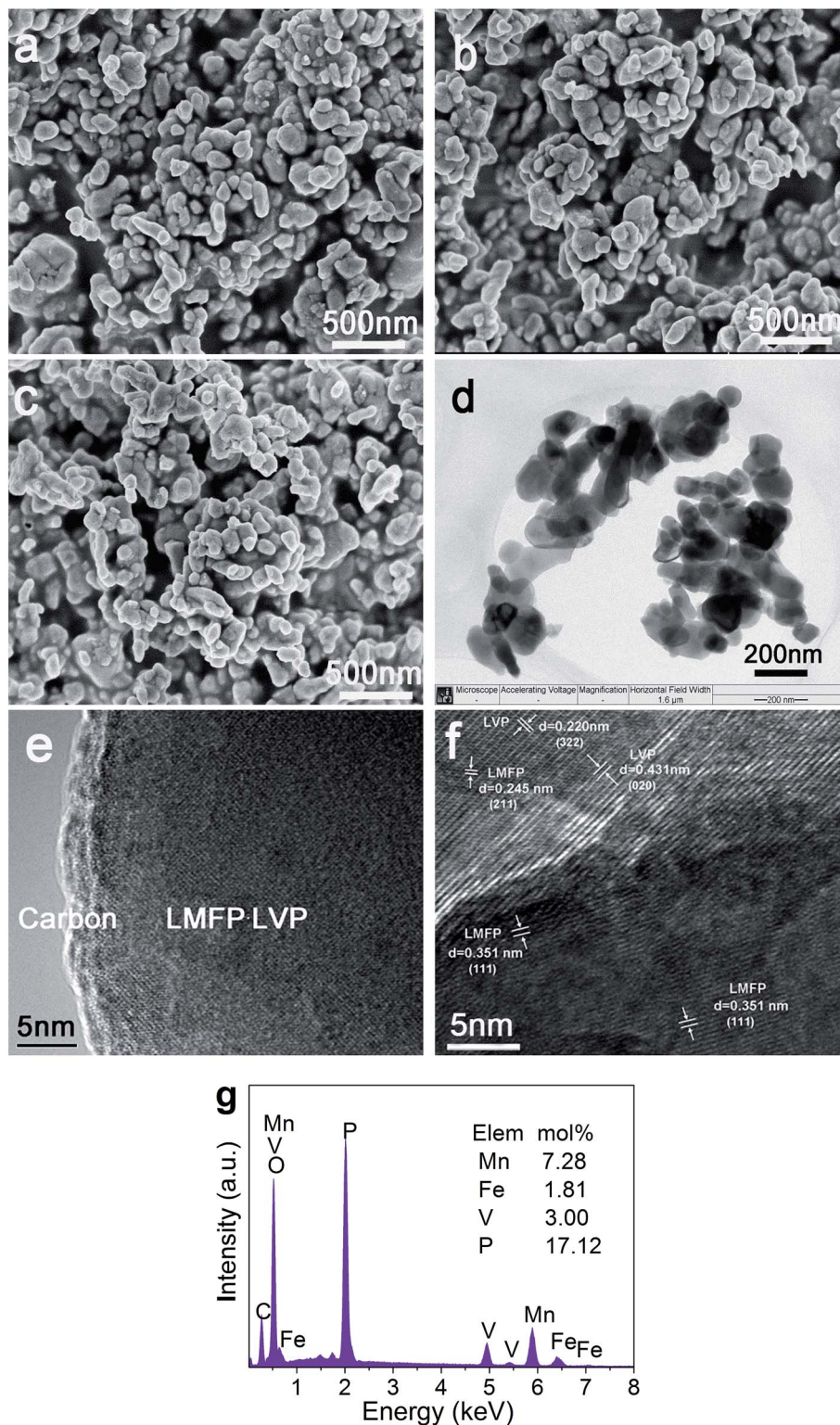


Fig. 2 SEM images of LMP/C (a), LMFP/C (b), and 6LMFP·LVP/C (c); TEM images (d and e), HRTEM image (f), and EDS pattern (g) of 6LMFP·LVP/C.



6.27 wt%, 6.32 wt%, and 6.43 wt% for the LMP/C, LMFP/C, and 6LMFP·LVP/C powders, respectively. The phase compositions of 6LMFP·LVP/C are indicated in the HRTEM image (Fig. 2f). The interplanar spacing of 0.351 and 0.245 nm correspond to the (111) and (211) planes of  $\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4$ , whereas the interplanar spacing of 0.431 nm and 0.220 are attributed to the (020) and (322) planes of  $\text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3$ . The results imply that both  $\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4$  and  $\text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3$  phases coexist in the 6LMFP·LVP/C composite particles. The EDS spectrum of 6LMFP·LVP/C (Fig. 2g) displays the characteristic peaks of Mn, Fe, V, P, O, and C. The molar ratio of Mn:Fe:V is 7.28:1.81:3.00, which is basically in accordance with the theoretical ratio of 2.4:0.6:1. The chemical composition of 6LMFP·LVP/C was further measured by ICP and is listed in Table 2.

Fig. 3 illustrates the formation procedure of 6LMFP·LVP/C. Lauric acid ( $\text{CH}_3(\text{CH}_2)_{10}\text{COOH}$ ) is a saturated fatty acid with a relatively low melting point of 44 °C. During the heating process, lauric acid can form a molten media in which the carboxylic groups of lauric acid conjugate the inorganic cations and the long carbon chains separate the precursors. Thus, the 6LMFP·LVP crystallites can grow in a confined environment. Moreover, the crystallites are enveloped in an *in situ* conductive carbon layer generated from the decomposition of lauric acid. This effectively restrains the aggregation of the nanoparticles and further growth. Lauric acid, acted as a surfactant and carbon source, is favorable for fabricating granular nanocomposites with good dispersion. The distribution of the elements in 6LMFP·LVP/C was characterized by EDS. As shown in Fig. 4, the elements Mn, Fe, V, and P are homogeneously dispersed in every 6LMFP·LVP/C nanoparticle, such as a particle marked as A. The EDS mappings, together with HRTEM image (Fig. 2f), indicate that the  $\text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3$  phase uniformly diffuses into the  $\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4$  matrix, forming a multiphase dispersoid rather than existing as individual  $\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4$  and  $\text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3$  particles.

Fig. 5a shows the initial charge–discharge curves of the LMP/C, LMFP/C, and 6LMFP·LVP/C composites. The cells were charged to 4.5 V at 0.1C rate (17 mA  $\text{g}^{-1}$ ), kept at 4.5 V until the current decreased to 0.02C, and then discharged to 2.0 V at 0.1C rate. As observed for LMP/C, a pair of sloping voltage plateaus (4.22/3.93 V) corresponds to the phase transition of  $\text{LiMnPO}_4 \leftrightarrow \text{MnPO}_4$ .<sup>1,2</sup> Compared with LMP/C, LMFP/C presents another pair of voltage plateaus (3.62/3.58 V), associating with the phase transition of  $\text{LiFePO}_4 \leftrightarrow \text{FePO}_4$ .<sup>9,10</sup> For the 6LMFP·LVP/C sample, three pairs of voltage plateaus (3.59/3.58, 3.68/3.66,

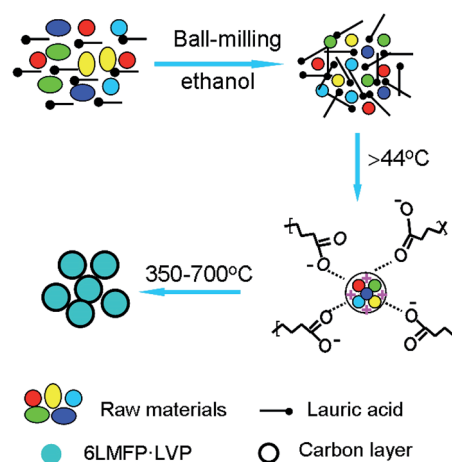


Fig. 3 Schematic of the synthesis of carbon-coated 6LMFP·LVP.

4.08/4.02 V) are assigned to the sequential phase transitions of  $\text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3 \leftrightarrow \text{Li}_{2.5}\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3 \leftrightarrow \text{Li}_2\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3 \leftrightarrow \text{LiV}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3$ ,<sup>32,36,42</sup> respectively. However, the charge plateau of  $\text{Fe}^{3+}/\text{Fe}^{2+}$  is invisible because of overlapping with the plateau of  $\text{Li}_x\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3$  ( $x$  from 3 to 2.5). Note that the voltage difference between the charge and discharge plateaus corresponding to  $\text{LiMnPO}_4 \leftrightarrow \text{MnPO}_4$  decreases when Fe is introduced and further decreases when  $\text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3$  is introduced, demonstrating smaller polarization and higher electrochemical kinetics. Moreover, the initial discharge capacity reaches 162 mA h  $\text{g}^{-1}$  for the 6LMFP·LVP/C sample at 0.1C rate, whereas it reaches 144 mA h  $\text{g}^{-1}$  for LMFP/C and 124 mA h  $\text{g}^{-1}$  for LMP/C under the same conditions.

Fig. 5b exhibits the rate capabilities of the LMP/C, LMFP/C, and 6LMFP·LVP/C composites. Obviously, the rate capability of 6LMFP·LVP/C is superior to those of LMFP/C and LMP/C. The discharge capacities of 6LMFP·LVP/C at 0.5, 1, and 2C rates are 150, 146, and 139 mA h  $\text{g}^{-1}$ , compared to 133, 125, and 111 mA h  $\text{g}^{-1}$  for LMFP/C and 111, 102, and 92 mA h  $\text{g}^{-1}$  for LMP/C. Even at 5C, a higher discharge capacity of 128 mA h  $\text{g}^{-1}$  for 6LMFP·LVP/C was achieved. The rate performance of the as-prepared 6LMFP·LVP/C nanocomposite exceeded those of the reported  $\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4/\text{C}$ ,<sup>13</sup>  $0.5\text{LiMnPO}_4 \cdot 0.5\text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3/\text{C}$ ,<sup>30</sup>  $5\text{LiMn}_{0.9}\text{Fe}_{0.1}\text{PO}_4 \cdot \text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3/\text{C}$  (ref. 36), and  $0.95\text{LiMn}_{0.95}\text{Fe}_{0.05}\text{PO}_4 \cdot 0.05\text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3/\text{C}$  (ref. 35) composites. The cycling stabilities of LMP/C, LMFP/C, and 6LMFP·LVP/C were characterized at 0.5C after the rate capability test. It can be observed that the discharge capacities of these composites decrease with the increasing C-rate. More importantly, when the discharge rate returns to 0.5C after testing at 5C, the capacities of three composites resumed the former state and faded less than 5% after subsequent 100 cycles, implying high electrochemical reversibility and structural stability for all the samples. The superior high-rate performance of 6LMFP·LVP/C could be attributed to its unique heterogeneous nanostructures. First, the collaborative effect of Fe and V co-doping and the complete conductive carbon coating effectively promote the electrical conductivity in the bulk phase and at the surface, respectively.<sup>3</sup> Second, the dispersion of  $\text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3$  crystallites in the

Table 2 Molar ratio of the prepared 6LMFP·LVP/C measured by ICP

Element	Molar ratio	
	Theoretical	6LMFP·LVP/C
Li	4.5	4.63
Mn	2.4	2.43
Fe	0.6	0.58
V	1	1
P	4.5	4.42



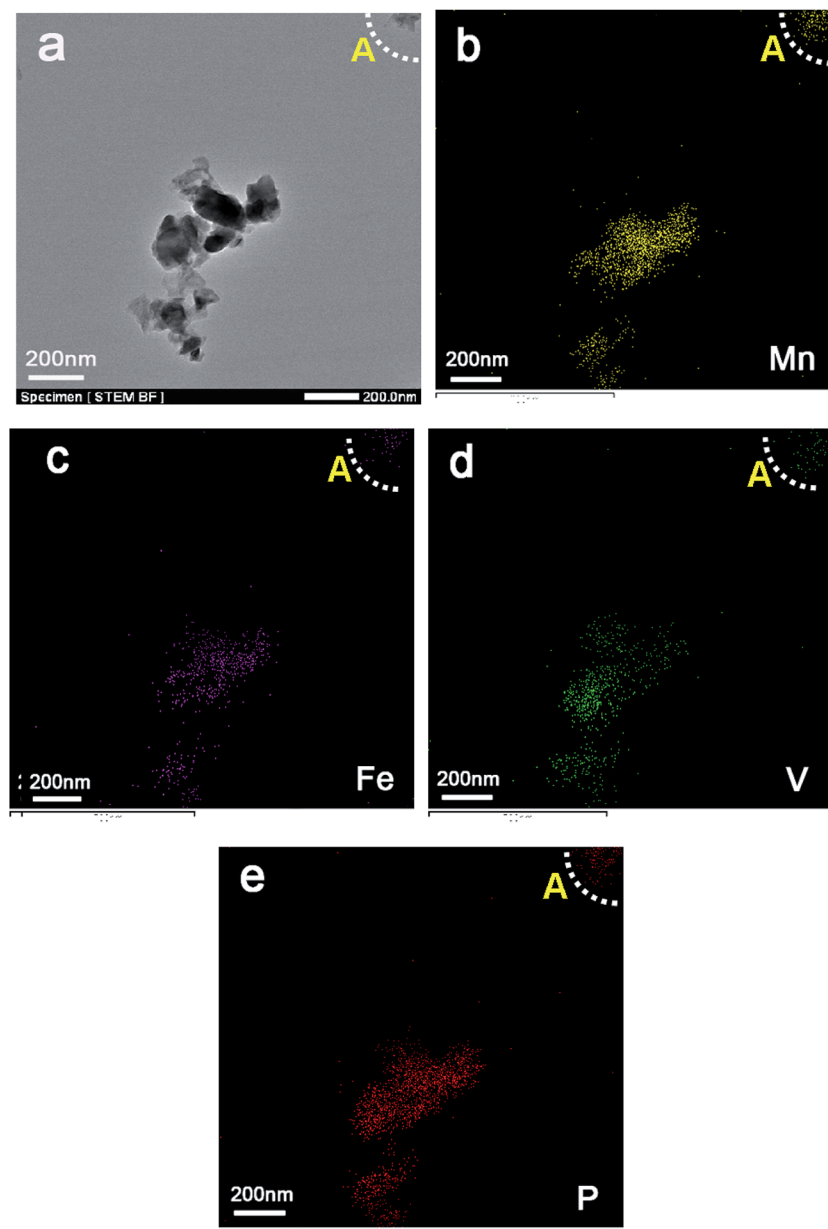


Fig. 4 EDS mappings of 6LMFP·LVP/C for Mn, Fe, V, and P.

$\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4$  matrix reduces the  $\text{Li}^+$  diffusion pathway in bulk  $\text{LiMnPO}_4$ , which facilitates faster Li-ion intercalation kinetics.

The electrochemical performance of the 6LMFP·LVP/C composite cycled in a wide voltage range of 2.0–4.8 V was also been investigated. Fig. 6a displays the typical charge–discharge curves of 6LMFP·LVP/C at 0.1C and 0.5C. When the end-of-charge voltage extended to 4.8 V, another plateau at 4.52 V in the charge curve was observed, which belonged to the extraction of the third  $\text{Li}^+$  from  $\text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3$ . The charge and discharge capacities of 6LMFP·LVP/C at the second cycle are 178 and 167  $\text{mA h g}^{-1}$  at 0.1C rate, respectively, with the corresponding coulombic efficiency of 93.8%. At a 0.5C rate, a discharge capacity of 143  $\text{mA h g}^{-1}$  was still

achieved, and the capacity retention was as high as 91% at the end of 250 cycles. The slight capacity loss may be induced by the deterioration of the electrode/electrolyte interface, resulting from the electrolyte decomposition at high potential.

Fig. 7 describes the charge–discharge curve and cycle life (inset) of 6LMFP·LVP/C at 50 °C. In comparison with the charge–discharge curve obtained at room temperature, as shown in Fig. 5a, 6LMFP·LVP/C presents smaller hysteresis between charge and discharge and flatter charge plateau of  $\text{Mn}^{3+}/\text{Mn}^{2+}$  at elevated temperature. Furthermore, the charge plateaus of  $\text{Fe}^{3+}/\text{Fe}^{2+}$  (3.55 V) and  $\text{V}^{5+}/\text{V}^{4+}$  (4.47 V) can be distinctly observed, demonstrating its improved electrode kinetics at high temperature. The 6LMFP·LVP/C delivers



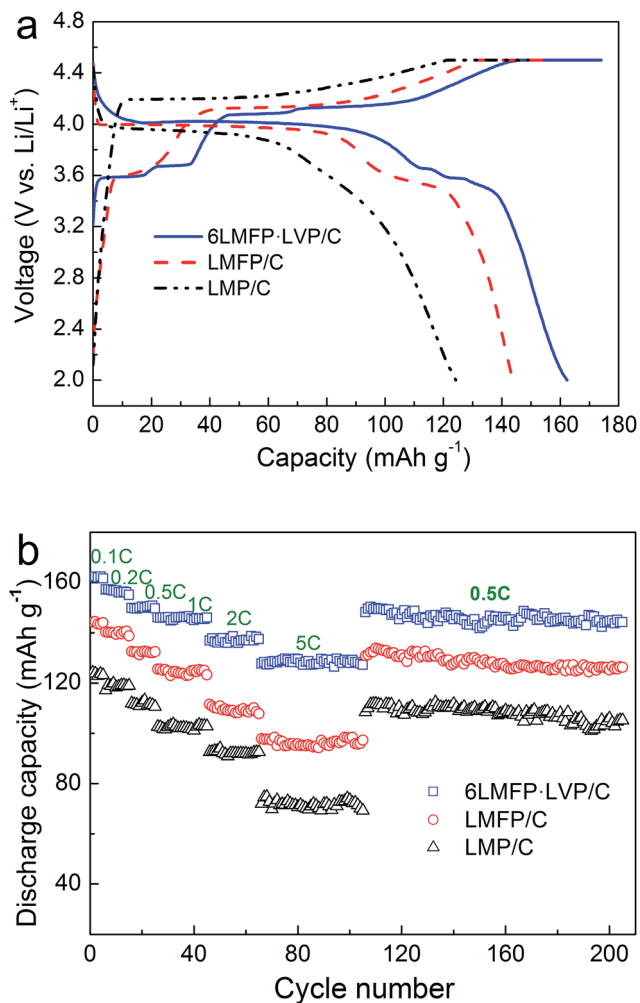


Fig. 5 Charge–discharge curves at 0.1C rate (a) and rate capabilities (b) of LMP/C, LMFP/C and 6LMFP·LVP/C.

a large reversible capacity of 154 mA h g<sup>-1</sup> at 1C rate and provides a capacity retention of about 90% over 100 cycles, illustrating a good high-temperature stability of the electrode.

To further clarify the synergistic effects of the solid solution and multiphase composition, cyclic voltammetry was employed to analyze the lithiation/delithiation behavior. Fig. 8 compares the CV curves of LMP/C, LMFP/C, and 6LMFP·LVP/C electrodes at a scan speed of 0.1 mV s<sup>-1</sup>. One couple peak located at 3.68/3.51 V for LMFP/C and three couple peaks located at 3.62/3.57, 3.70/3.65, and 4.11/4.04 V for 6LMFP·LVP/C are ascribed to the redox of Fe<sup>3+</sup>/Fe<sup>2+</sup> and V<sup>4+</sup>/V<sup>3+</sup>, respectively. The peak couples at 4.33/3.92 for LMP/C, 4.23/3.92 for LMFP/C, and 4.20/3.95 V for 6LMFP·LVP/C are associated with the redox of Mn<sup>3+</sup>/Mn<sup>2+</sup>. More significantly, the separation potentials between the Mn<sup>3+</sup>/Mn<sup>2+</sup> redox peaks decrease from 0.41 V of LMP/C to 0.31 V of LMFP/C and 0.25 V of 6LMFP·LVP/C. The abovementioned results are in accordance with the charge–discharge curves, which suggest that the electrochemical activity of LiMnPO<sub>4</sub> is remarkably enhanced by the appropriate Fe substitution and combination of Li<sub>3</sub>V<sub>2</sub>(PO<sub>4</sub>)<sub>3</sub>.

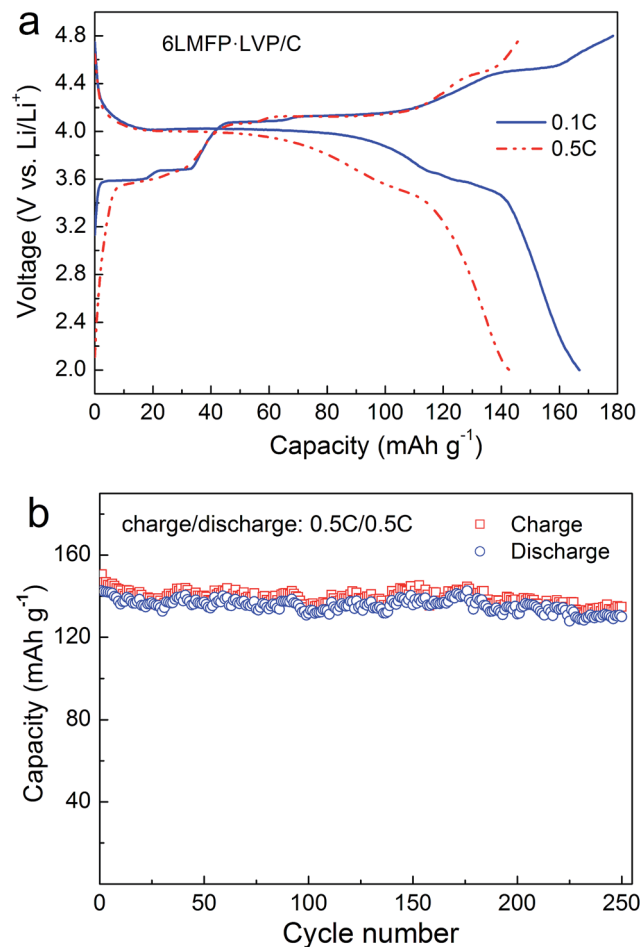


Fig. 6 Charge–discharge curves (a) and cycling performance (b) of 6LMFP·LVP/C between 2.0 and 4.8 V.

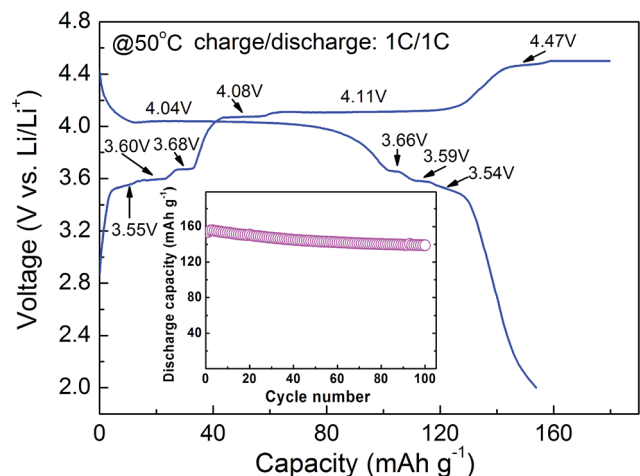


Fig. 7 Charge–discharge curve and cycle life (inset) of 6LMFP·LVP/C at 50 °C.

Fig. 9 shows the AC impedance spectra of LMP/C, LMFP/C, and 6LMFP·LVP/C electrodes at the fully discharged state after 100 cycles. All the spectra present a depressed semicircle in



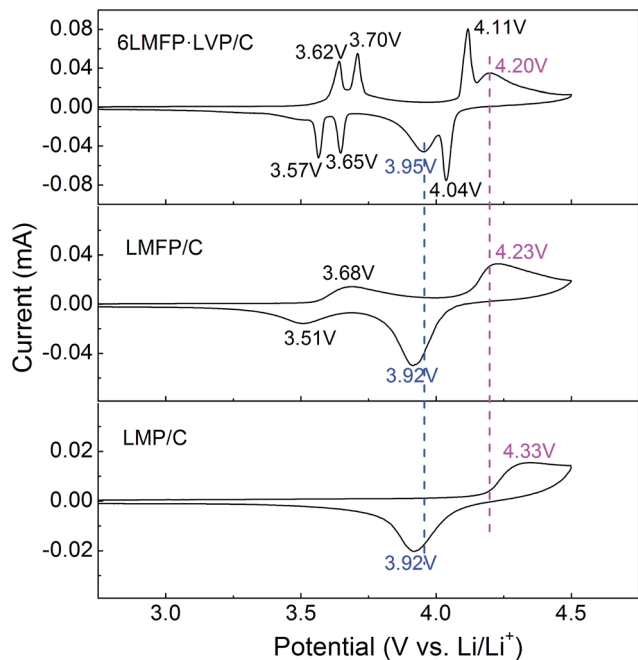


Fig. 8 CV curves of the LMP/C, LMFP/C, and 6LMFP·LVP/C electrodes.

the high-medium frequency region, corresponding to the charge-transfer impedance at the electrode/electrolyte interface, and a straight line in the low frequency region, relating to the  $\text{Li}^+$  diffusion in the electrode material. The slope of the straight line is proportional to the  $\text{Li}^+$  diffusion coefficient.<sup>13,42</sup> By comparing the diameter of the semicircles and the slope of the straight lines, it was found that 6LMFP·LVP/C exhibits smaller interface impedance and much faster  $\text{Li}^+$  diffusion than LMFP/C and LMP/C. This demonstrates that the electronic and ionic conductivity of 6LMFP·LVP/C are better than those of LMFP/C and LMP/C and also clarifies the fast rate capability of 6LMFP·LVP/C.

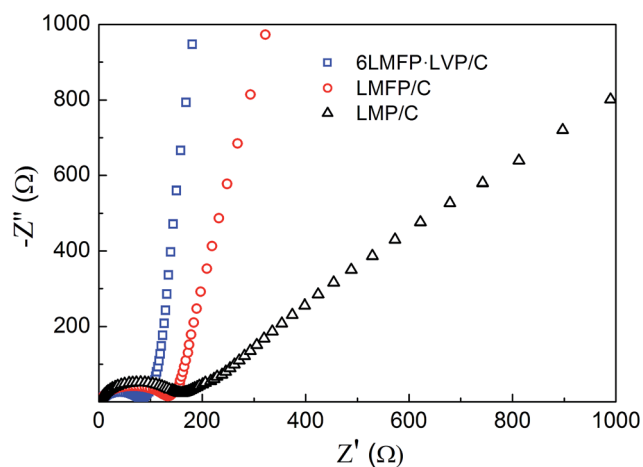


Fig. 9 EIS spectra of the LMP/C, LMFP/C, and 6LMFP·LVP/C electrodes after 100 cycles.

## 4. Conclusions

The  $6\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4 \cdot \text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3/\text{C}$  composite with the size of *ca.* 100–150 nm was successfully synthesized *via* a surfactant-assisted solid-state method employing lauric acid as a surfactant and carbon source. The use of lauric acid is beneficial for the fabrication of uniform nanoparticles with high dispersion. XRD and EDS mapping illustrate that the composite consists of  $\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4$  and  $\text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3$  phases, and the  $\text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3$  phase uniformly diffuses into the  $\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4$  matrix. The  $6\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4 \cdot \text{Li}_3\text{V}_2(\text{PO}_4)_3/\text{C}$  composite exhibits much higher specific capacity and better rate capability than the individual  $\text{LiMn}_{0.8}\text{Fe}_{0.2}\text{PO}_4/\text{C}$  and  $\text{LiMnPO}_4/\text{C}$ . The enhanced electrochemical performance of the multiphase composite demonstrates its use as a promising cathode material for high-power lithium ion batteries.

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