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Author: Elisabetta Finocchio Alessandro H.A. Monteverde Videla Stefania Specchia



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**Surface chemistry and reactivity of Pd/BaCeO₃·2ZrO₂ catalyst upon sulphur hydrothermal treatment
for the total oxidation of methane**

Elisabetta Finocchio¹, Alessandro H.A. Monteverde Videla², Stefania Specchia^{2}*

¹ Università di Genova, Department of Civil, Chemical and Environmental Engineering, Piazzale Kennedy 1,
16129 Genova, Italy

² Politecnico di Torino, Department of Applied Science and Technology, Corso Duca degli Abruzzi 24,
10129 Torino, Italy

* stefania.specchia@polito.it; P: +390110904608; F: +390110904624

Highlights

▣ ► 2% Pd/BaCeO₃·2ZrO₂ catalyst prepared by solution combustion synthesis ► Exposed up to 450 h sulphur hydro-thermal ageing treatment ► Intermediate better performance due to ZrO₂ and CeO₂ segregation acting as O₂ donor ► Final worsening of the performance towards methane combustion ► Ageing mechanisms: subsurface-bulk sulphates formation and oxidation of surface Pd⁰

ABSTRACT

Starting from metal nitrates and glycine, 2% Pd/BaCeO₃·2ZrO₂ catalyst was prepared by solution combustion synthesis and tested towards the total oxidation of methane. The catalyst underwent heavy sulphur-hydrothermal treatment at 800 °C up to 450 h. The catalyst was fully characterized (XRD, BET, SEM, O₂-TPD, FTIR analysis and catalytic activity via CH₄-TPC) every 150 h. With ageing, catalytic activity tests demonstrated that the catalyst was heavily poisoned after 150 h; then it recovered the catalytic activity after 300 h, with a resulting performance better than the one reached in the fresh status. At the end of the sulphur-hydrothermal treatment, after 450 h, the catalyst resulted heavily poisoned again. On the fresh catalyst surface, IR analysis of CO adsorption evidenced the formation of highly dispersed Pd metal clusters and Pd ions. After 300 h of sulphur hydrothermal ageing, the increased catalytic activity towards methane combustion was probably supported by the segregation of ZrO₂ and CeO₂. Moreover, subsurface and bulk sulphate formation was detected with ageing and Pd metal species were not anymore available for CO coordination, probably because hindered by sulphate deposits. Prevailing ageing mechanisms resulted in the

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