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► **To cite this version:**

Michèle Pijolat, Gerardo Colon, Kester Kenevey, Françoise Valdivieso, Michel Soustelle, et al.. Influence of composition on the thermal stability of ceria-zirconia mixed oxides. F. Solymosi, J. Raskó. 14th International Symposium on the Reactivity of Solids, Budapest, 27 au 31 août 2000, Aug 2000, Budapest, Hungary. North Holland, 2001. <emse-00720721>

**HAL Id: emse-00720721**

**<https://hal-emse.ccsd.cnrs.fr/emse-00720721>**

Submitted on 25 Jul 2012

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→ ISRS (XIV<sup>th</sup>), Budapest 2000.

## INFLUENCE OF COMPOSITION ON THE THERMAL STABILITY OF CERIA-ZIRCONIA MIXED OXIDES

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Ceria-zirconia mixed oxides are essential components in the three-way catalytic converters for automotive exhaust gas treatment and they must offer a good thermal stability in severe operating conditions. It is thus important to have a precise knowledge of the influence of the composition of the mixed oxide on the textural and structural properties of the catalytic materials. The behaviour of ceria-zirconia high surface area materials of nominal composition between  $\text{CeO}_2$  and  $\text{Ce}_{0.50}\text{Zr}_{0.50}\text{O}_2$ , either bare or loaded with low (<1% wt/wt) amounts of noble metals, palladium and platinum, was studied under oxidising conditions at 950°C. Calcination treatments were carried out under controlled oxidising atmosphere for periods of up to 96 hours. Powder X-ray diffraction and BET surface area data are reported.

A maximum in the kinetic rate of surface area decrease is observed for the composition  $\text{Ce}_{0.80}\text{Zr}_{0.20}\text{O}_2$  for which the initial fluorite structure remains unchanged during all the thermal treatment. Phase demixing is observed as sintering progresses for  $\text{Ce}_{0.68}\text{Zr}_{0.32}\text{O}_2$  and  $\text{Ce}_{0.50}\text{Zr}_{0.50}\text{O}_2$  with some differences regarding the composition of the new phases, or the presence of the noble metals. The results are discussed from a thermodynamic viewpoint, which puts in evidence the important contribution of surface energy to the stability domain of the mixed oxides.