

Tuning the Cerium-Based Metal–Organic Framework Formation by Template Effect and Precursor Selection

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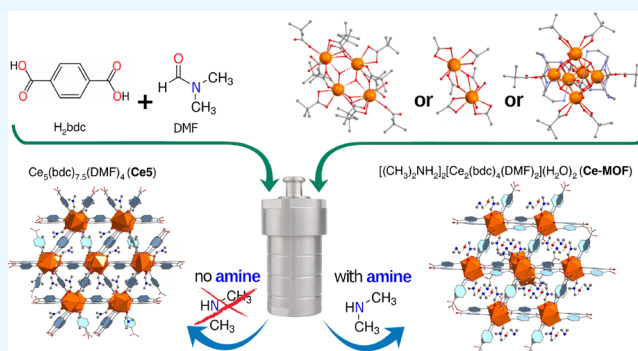
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ABSTRACT: The novel metal–organic framework $[(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{NH}_2]_2[\text{Ce}_2(\text{bdc})_4(\text{DMF})_2] \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (**Ce-MOF**, H_2bdc —terephthalic acid, DMF—*N,N*-dimethylformamide) was synthesized by a simple solvothermal method. **Ce-MOF** has 3D connectivity of **bcu** type with a dinuclear fragment connected with eight neighbors, while three types of guest species are residing in its pores: water, DMF, and dimethylammonium cations. Dimethylamine was demonstrated to have a decisive templating effect on the formation of **Ce-MOF**, as its deliberate addition to the solvothermal reaction allows the reproducible synthesis of the new framework. Otherwise, the previously reported MOF $\text{Ce}_5(\text{bdc})_{7.5}(\text{DMF})_4$ (**Ce5**) or its composite with nano- CeO_2 ($\text{CeO}_2@ \text{Ce5}$) was obtained. Various Ce carboxylate precursors and synthetic conditions were explored to evidence the major stability of **Ce-MOF** and **Ce5** within the Ce carboxylate- H_2bdc -DMF system. The choice of precursor impacts the surface area of **Ce-MOF** and thus its reactivity in an oxidative atmosphere. The *in situ* PXRD and TG-DTA-MS study of **Ce-MOF** in a nonoxidative atmosphere demonstrates that it eliminates H_2O and DMF along with $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{NH}$ guest species in two distinct stages at 70 and 250 °C, respectively, yielding $[\text{Ce}_2(\text{bdc})_3(\text{H}_2\text{bdc})]$. The H_2bdc molecule is removed at 350 °C with the formation of novel modification of $\text{Ce}_2(\text{bdc})_3$, which is stable at least up to 450 °C. According to the total X-ray scattering study with pair distribution function analysis, the most pronounced local structure transformation occurs upon departure of DMF and $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{NH}$ guest species, which is in line with the *in situ* PXRD experiment. In an oxidative atmosphere, **Ce-MOF** undergoes combustion to CeO_2 at a temperature as low as 390 °C. MOF-derived CeO_2 from **Ce-MOF**, **Ce5**, and $\text{CeO}_2@ \text{Ce5}$ exhibits catalytic activity in the CO oxidation reaction.



1. INTRODUCTION

Metal–organic frameworks (MOFs) draw substantial attention from many scientific groups nowadays. The main features of MOFs—high surface area and porosity—provide a wide range of potential applications such as gas storage and separation,^{1–3} sensing,^{4–7} capture of toxic metals,^{8,9} drug delivery,^{10,11} or catalysis^{12–18} including photo-^{19,20} and electrocatalysis.^{21,22} Terephthalic acid (1,4-benzenedicarboxylic acid, H_2bdc) is a simple rigid ditopic linker often employed for construction of MOFs with several milestone examples such as $\text{Zn}_4\text{O}(\text{bdc})_3$ (**MOF-5**),²³ $\text{Cr}(\text{OH})(\text{bdc})$ (**MIL-53**),²⁴ or $\text{Zr}_6\text{O}_4(\text{OH})_4(\text{bdc})_6$ (**UiO-66**).²⁵

Lanthanide (Ln) MOFs are attracting increasing attention due to their specific geometrical features that provide wide possibilities of topology design and interesting properties related to magnetic and luminescent applications.^{26–28} Despite the progress in the field and tens of thousands of MOFs reported to date,²⁹ even simple systems such as Ln- H_2bdc have yet to be fully explored. Very recent developments on new Ln-

based MOFs with terephthalic linkers still continue to emerge.^{30–32}

Cerium MOFs are of particular interest among the Ln-based MOFs due to the unique electronic properties of the Ce ion featuring two stable oxidation states (+3 and +4) and enabling new possible applications as catalysts in various redox processes due to $\text{Ce}^{3+}/\text{Ce}^{4+}$ switching,^{33–37} e.g., for CO conversion to CO_2 .^{33,38,39} Like other lanthanides, Ce can adopt various coordination environments. Therefore, the search for new deliberate and reproducible synthetic methods for Ce MOFs is a challenging task. A high number of Ce^{4+} MOFs have been synthesized to date.⁴⁰ The majority of them contain *in situ* assembled $\{\text{Ce}^{\text{IV}}_6\text{O}_4(\text{OH})_4\}$ cores and are the most

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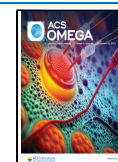


Table 1. Summary of Ce³⁺ MOFs with Terephthalate Linkers Reported in Literature with Porosity Analysis Performed with PLATON^{a,46}

formula	building unit	free volume (%)	free volume desolvated (%)	CCDC ref code	CCDC number	ref
Ce ₆ (bdc) ₉ (DMF) ₉ (H ₂ O) ₃	chain	26.9	49.1	ALUJIB	745286	30
Ce ₃ (bdc) _{7.5} (DMF) ₄ (Ce5)	chain	29.6	43.0	GOBXAY	912350	31
Ce ₂ (bdc) ₃ (DEF) ₂	chain	30.3	51.3	QOCSAD	630356	47
[(CH ₃) ₂ NH ₂] ₂ [Ce ₂ (bdc) ₄ (DMF) ₂] ₂ ·2H ₂ O (Ce-MOF)	dinuclear	32.3	52.7		2106041	this work
Ce ₂ (bdc) ₃ (DMF) ₂ (DMSO) ₂	dinuclear	31.9	56.2	BUVHEH	844407	48
Ce ₂ (bdc) ₃ (e-urea) ₂ (H ₂ O) ₂	dinuclear	28.0	45.6	LAGPOA	786945	49
Ce ₂ (bdc) ₂ (NMP) ₄ (ac) ₂	dinuclear	28.2	60.4	UNCEX	868529	50

^aAbbreviations for ligands: H₂bdc—terephthalic acid; DMF—*N,N*-dimethylformamide, DMSO—dimethyl sulfoxide, e-urea—ethylene urea, DEF—*N,N*-diethylformamide, NMP—*N*-methyl pyrrolidone, Hac—acetic acid.

extensively studied after the preparation of the Ce-UiO-66 isorecticular analog of the corresponding Zr-based UiO-66 MOF.⁴¹ MOFs based on Ce³⁺ usually contain mono-,^{42,43} di-,^{44,48,49} or 1D chain polynuclear^{30,31,45,47} building blocks connected by organic linkers. A handful of Ce³⁺ MOFs with nonsubstituted terephthalate linkers have been reported to date (Table 1).

Anionic MOFs are of particular interest through the possibility of sensing and separation of charged species, protonic conduction,^{51–53} dye absorption,⁵⁴ and capture of toxic metals.⁵⁵ A vast number of the reported anionic MOFs contain dimethylammonium cations generated *in situ* via degradation of dimethylformamide usually employed as the solvent for MOF synthesis, e.g., {[(CH₃)₂NH₂]₃(SO₄)₂[Zn₂(ox)₃]}_n (ox = oxalate),⁵² [(CH₃)₂NH₂]₂[Cd₃(L)]₂·2H₂O (H₄L = 2,5'-di(3',5'-dicarboxylphenyl)pyridine),⁵³ and {[(CH₃)₂NH₂]₂[Zn₃(L)]₂·9H₂O} (L = 5,5'-(1,4-phenylenebis(methylene))-bis(oxy)diisophthalic acid).⁵⁵ This potentially decreases synthesis reproducibility with uncontrollable generation of dimethylammonium, as to the best of our knowledge none of the reported synthetic methods employ deliberate addition of dimethylamine to the synthetic mixture.

CO is a toxic gas that is generated by incomplete combustion of fuel from various sources, such as power plants, cement plants, vehicle exhaust emissions, and burning biomass. During CO oxidation, catalysts based on noble metals showed the highest catalytic activity and stability, even at low temperatures.⁵⁶ However, there are several disadvantages: low abundance, high price, and stringent requirements for the catalyst preparation process. Therefore, the development of highly active and inexpensive CO oxidation catalysts to replace precious metal catalysts is of great importance for large-scale applications. It is known that the excellent catalytic activity of cerium dioxide catalysts in the CO oxidation reaction can be achieved due to oxygen vacancies on the catalyst surface forming upon synthesis of nanoceria. Recently, MOF-derived ceria-based catalysts in the CO oxidation reaction have become a good substitute for precious metal catalysts due to their low price, large reserves, and high catalytic activity.³³ Therefore, the exploration of new synthetic pathways to produce ceria for catalytic purposes is an urgent matter.

In this article, we have developed a new approach for the synthesis of anionic MOFs containing dimethylammonium cations. We report on the synthesis of the Ce-based MOF [(CH₃)₂NH₂]₂[Ce₂(bdc)₄(DMF)₂]₂·2H₂O (Ce-MOF) and fine-tuning of synthetic conditions leading to this new target compound in the Ln-H₂bdc-DMF system. The crystal

structure of Ce-MOF was determined by means of single-crystal X-ray diffraction and by PXRD with Rietveld refinement, supported by pair distribution function (PDF) analysis. TGA-DTA-MS, *in situ* PXRD, and BET add insight on the porosity, specific surface area, and solvent content of the MOF. The effect of the precursor selection on the surface area, reactivity in oxidative conditions, and catalytic activity of MOF-derived CeO₂ in CO oxidation reaction is also reported.

2. EXPERIMENTAL SECTION

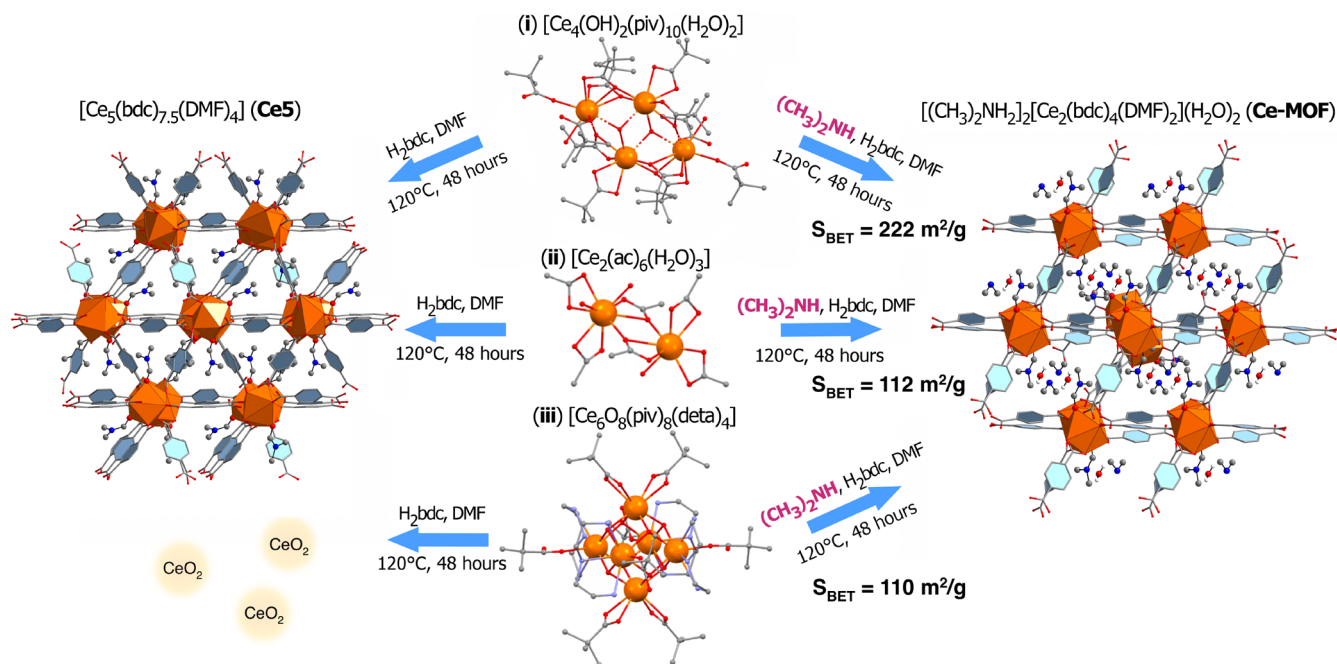
Cerium nitrate Ce(NO₃)₃·6H₂O (99%, Sigma-Aldrich), cerium acetate Ce(CH₃COO)₃·1.5H₂O (analytical grade, Reakhim, Russia), terephthalic acid (H₂bdc, 98%, Sigma-Aldrich), diethylenetriamine (deta, 99%, Sigma-Aldrich), dimethylamine (33% aq solution, Reakhim, Russia), *N,N*-dimethylformamide (DMF, 99.9%, Ekos-1, Russia), pivalic acid (Hpiv, 98%, Merck), and NaOH (analytical grade, Reakhim, Russia) were used as received. Ce(III) hydroxo pivalate Ce₄(OH)₂(piv)₁₀(H₂O)₂ and Ce(IV) oxo pivalate Ce₆O₈(piv)₈(deta)₄ were synthesized according to previously reported methods.^{57,58}

One general method was employed to prepare [(CH₃)₂NH₂]₂[Ce₂(bdc)₄(DMF)₂]₂·2H₂O (Ce-MOF), differing only in the precursor compound and its amount. A mixture of H₂bdc (136 mg, 0.8 mmol) and (i) Ce₄(OH)₂(piv)₁₀(H₂O)₂ (170 mg, 0.1 mmol), (ii) Ce(CH₃COO)₃·1.5H₂O (136 mg, 0.4 mmol), (iii) Ce₆O₈(piv)₈(deta)₄ (150 mg, 0.07 mmol), or (iv) Ce(NO₃)₃·6H₂O (178.5 mg, 0.4 mmol) was dispersed in DMF (12 mL). Then, dimethylamine water solution (340 μL, 2 mmol) was added and the mixture was placed in Teflon-lined stainless-steel reactors (23 mL), heated at 120 °C for 48 h, and then cooled to room temperature for 24 h. The resulting powder was filtered off, washed with DMF and ethanol, dried, and stored in air. Yield was determined to be ca. 80%.

Ce₅(bdc)_{7.5}(DMF)₄ (Ce5) was prepared from H₂bdc and (i) Ce₄(OH)₂(piv)₁₀(H₂O)₂ or (ii) Ce(CH₃COO)₃·1.5H₂O by the same method as described above in the absence of dimethylamine. Yield was ca. 60%.

The CeO₂@Ce5 composite was prepared from H₂bdc and (iii) Ce₆O₈(piv)₈(deta)₄ by the same method as described above in the absence of dimethylamine. The yield was ca. 50%.

Single crystals of Ce-MOF for X-ray structure analysis were serendipitously obtained during the optimization of the preparation method of Ce5.

Scheme 1. Synthetic Scheme of Ce-MOF and Ce5 Preparation from Various Ce Carboxylate Precursors^a

^a S_{BET} values refer to the desolvated Ce-MOF samples obtained from the respective precursors.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. General Remarks on Synthesis. Recently, we have elaborated the synthetic routes for tetranuclear $\{\text{Ln}_4(\text{OH})_2\}$, $\{\text{Ln}_4(\text{OH})_4\}$ and hexanuclear $\{\text{Ce}_6\text{O}_8\}$, $\{\text{Ln}_6(\text{OH})_8\}$ lanthanide carboxylate complexes.^{57–59} The intent of the current study was to examine the possibility of creating new MOFs by linking the di-, tetra-, and hexanuclear Ce complexes into an extended 3D framework via the terephthalate linker.

The compounds $[(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{NH}]_2[\text{Ce}_2(\text{bdc})_4(\text{DMF})_2] \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$ (Ce-MOF) and previously reported $\text{Ce}_5(\text{bdc})_{7.5}(\text{DMF})_4$ ³¹ (Ce5) were successfully synthesized by solvothermal method from terephthalic acid (H_2bdc) and three different Ce carboxylate precursors, (i) $\text{Ce}_4(\text{OH})_2(\text{piv})_{10}(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2$, or (ii) $\text{Ce}(\text{CH}_3\text{COO})_3 \cdot 1.5\text{H}_2\text{O}$, or (iii) $\text{Ce}_6\text{O}_8(\text{piv})_8(\text{deta})_4$, in DMF as outlined in Scheme 1.

The solvothermal reaction that is usually employed for preparation of MOFs is carried out at a relatively high temperature and autogenous pressure of the solvent. Even a slight change in reaction conditions (temperature, pH, presence of modulating reactant) may guide it to a different product.^{60,61}

Apart from the desired reaction, interfering processes could occur, including decomposition of the compounds. Accordingly, *in situ* generated dimethylammonium cation $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{NH}_2^+$ is a frequent guest in many anionic MOF crystal structures due to the solvent (DMF) decomposition in the temperature range of 100–160 °C.^{62–70}

Indeed, in the present work, several serendipitously formed single crystals of the Ce-MOF byproduct were harvested from the reaction product of solvothermal synthesis between $\text{Ce}_6\text{O}_8(\text{piv})_8(\text{deta})_4$ and H_2bdc in DMF, while the main precipitate was the composite $\text{CeO}_2@\text{Ce5}$. As in previous works, the $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{NH}_2^+$ ions have formed due to hydrolysis of DMF in the presence of water traces and acted as a template for the framework assembly (see Section 3.4). However, out-of-control hydrolysis of DMF complicates the synthesis of pure

Ce-MOF powder in high yield. We have varied the Ce-containing precursor (i–iii), as well as temperature (120–160 °C), time (2–48 h), and reagent concentration in solvothermal syntheses, but most of the syntheses resulted in formation of Ce5. The only rigorous and easy way to reproducible synthesis of Ce-MOF was discovered to be the deliberate addition of $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{NH}$ excess into the reaction vessel. In our view, this novel approach opens the prospect for reproducible synthesis of a large variety of new and previously reported anionic MOFs on templating $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{NH}_2^+$ and related cations.

3.2. Synthesis and Characterization of Ce5 and $\text{CeO}_2@\text{Ce5}$. We found that the reaction between terephthalic acid (H_2bdc) and either (i) $\text{Ce}_4(\text{OH})_2(\text{piv})_{10}(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2$,⁵⁷ (ii) $\text{Ce}_2(\text{ac})_6(\text{H}_2\text{O})_3$, or (iii) $\text{Ce}_6\text{O}_8(\text{piv})_8(\text{deta})_4$ ⁵⁸ in DMF under a broad range of solvothermal conditions leads to formation of a previously reported stable Ce^{3+} -based MOF $\text{Ce}_5(\text{bdc})_{7.5}(\text{DMF})_4$ (Ce5) (Scheme 1 and Figure S1).^{31,71}

Notably, if $\text{Ce}_6\text{O}_8(\text{piv})_8(\text{deta})_4$ is used as a precursor, Ce^{4+} is only partially reduced to Ce^{3+} and the reaction leads to the formation of a $\text{CeO}_2@\text{Ce5}$ composite, according to PXRD data (Figure 1). The possible mechanism includes reduction of Ce^{4+} to Ce^{3+} by deta, which can be readily oxidized to form polyamines (Figure S2).^{72,73} Such types of CeO_2/MOF -based composites are currently studied as catalysts having a prospect to enhance catalytic activity and selectivity.^{74,75}

The broad peaks on the experimental PXRD pattern corresponding to CeO_2 reflect the nanoscale state of the particles in the composite. This is supported by the results of scanning electron microscopy (Figure S3), indicating that nano- CeO_2 is distributed on the surface of Ce5 crystals. Total X-ray scattering with PDF analysis demonstrated that the experimental PDF is in good agreement with the theoretical one of CeO_2 nanoparticles (Figure 2).

The average particle size of the nanomaterial can be deduced from the PDF being a histogram of interatomic distances as the distance at which the curve flattens out since the particle

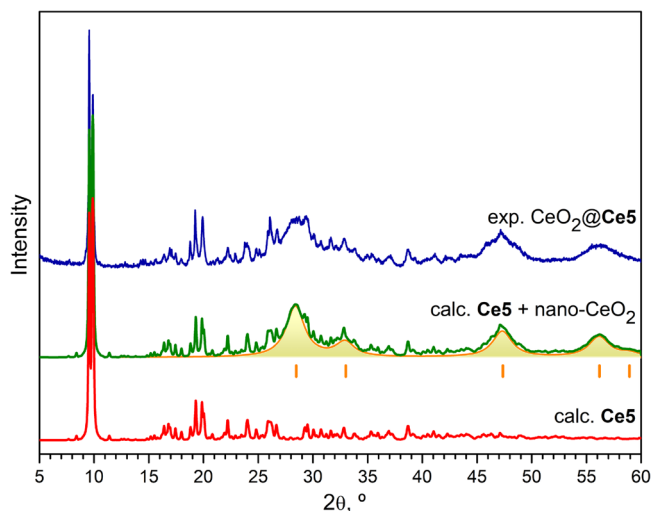


Figure 1. Experimental PXRD pattern ($\lambda = 1.5419 \text{ \AA}$) of $\text{CeO}_2@ \text{Ce5}$ (blue) and calculated patterns of Ce5 (red), nano- CeO_2 (yellow), and their composition Ce5+nano-CeO_2 (green). Peak broadening of the nano- CeO_2 pattern was calculated for a grain size of 4.5 nm according to the Scherrer equation. Vertical orange bars show the positions of the Bragg peaks of CeO_2 .

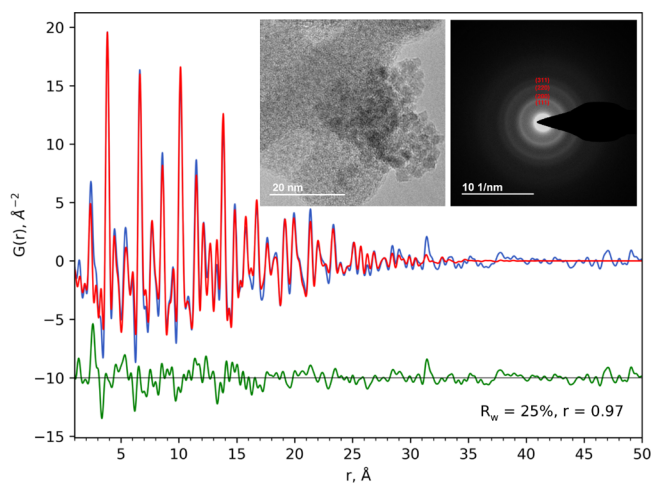


Figure 2. PDF refinement (red) of measured data of $\text{CeO}_2@ \text{Ce5}$ (blue) with the CeO_2 spherical particle model for the distance range 1–50 Å. Difference curve (green) is offset for clarity. Weighted agreement factor R_w and Pearson correlation coefficient r between the experimental and fitted curve are shown below the graphs. Insets show the TEM image of the composite (left) and selected-area diffraction pattern with clearly visible diffraction rings corresponding to CeO_2 (right).

diameter is reached, and no interatomic distances exist any further. The CeO_2 particle size value of 4.5 nm was obtained by the PDF fit using a spherical shape function and is in line with the results of transmission electron microscopy (Figure 2).

It should be noted that the CeO_2 signal dominates the PDF despite the comparable amounts of individual phases in $\text{CeO}_2@ \text{Ce5}$ (Synthesis section in the SI). The reason for this lies in the higher frequency of Ce–O and Ce–Ce distances in CeO_2 involving the strong scatterer Ce compared to many light scatterers (H, C, O, N) in Ce5 making the Ce5 signal hardly visible on the PDF of the composite. Yet, the structural remnants can be seen in the difference curve (Figure S4).

XANES spectra of Ce^{3+} near its L_3 edge (Figure 3) feature a single strong peak at 5726 eV, whereas those of Ce^{4+} have two

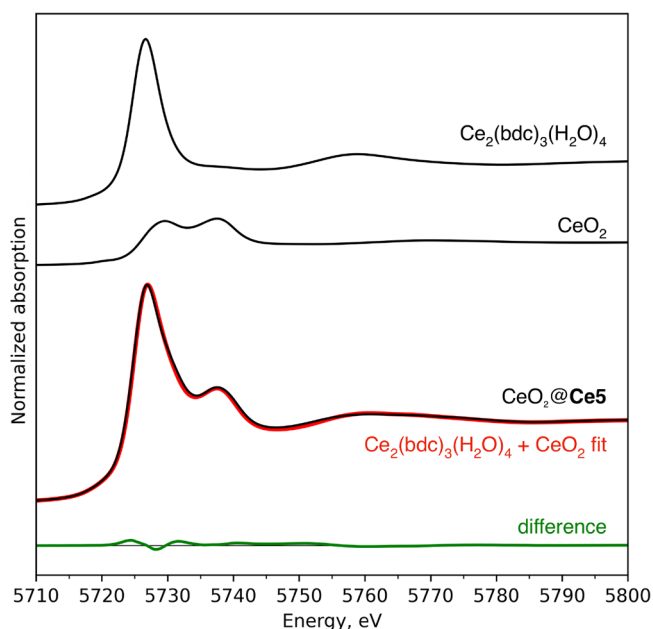


Figure 3. X-ray absorption near edge structure (XANES) spectra of $\text{CeO}_2@ \text{Ce5}$ recorded near the Ce L_3 absorption edge fitted with experimental spectra of the model compounds $\text{Ce}_2(\text{bdc})_3(\text{H}_2\text{O})_4$ and CeO_2 .

maxima of lower intensity at 5730 and 5739 eV. The experimental spectrum of $\text{CeO}_2@ \text{Ce5}$ can be represented as a sum of the two components, confirming the presence of Ce in both oxidation states. The fitting of XANES spectra of model compounds to the spectrum of $\text{CeO}_2@ \text{Ce5}$ estimates the $\text{Ce}^{3+}:\text{Ce}^{4+}$ molar ratio as $0.47 \pm 0.01:0.53 \pm 0.01$.

3.3. Synthesis of Ce-MOF. Inspired by a serendipitous formation of several Ce-MOF crystals as a byproduct due to hydrolysis of DMF, we decided to deliberately add the templating $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{NH}$ to the reaction mixture. This led to the formation of pure Ce-MOF for all three investigated carboxylate precursors— $\text{Ce}_6\text{O}_8(\text{piv})_8(\text{deta})_4$, $\text{Ce}_2(\text{ac})_6(\text{H}_2\text{O})_3$, and $\text{Ce}_4(\text{OH})_2(\text{piv})_{10}(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2$ (Figure 4). Notably, synthesis from $\text{Ce}_6\text{O}_8(\text{piv})_8(\text{deta})_4$ is accompanied by full reduction of Ce^{4+} to Ce^{3+} due to amine excess.

Variation of $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{NH}$ content demonstrated that Ce-MOF could be obtained in pure form within a wide range of $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{NH}$ content (1 to 10 equiv with respect to Ce), indicating the stability of the framework. Notably, if a simple and commercially available Ce source $\text{Ce}(\text{NO}_3)_3(\text{H}_2\text{O})_6$ was used as a precursor, it was not possible to obtain pure Ce-MOF (Figure S5), highlighting the importance of preorganized Ce atom arrangement in the carboxylate precursors for the synthesis. Despite the identical composition of the Ce-MOF powders derived from three different precursors, BET surface area measurements clearly indicate a substantial difference in specific surface area of the sample prepared from $\text{Ce}_4(\text{OH})_2(\text{piv})_{10}(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2$ having S_{BET} (222 m^2/g) twice as large as that of the ones prepared from $\text{Ce}_6\text{O}_8(\text{piv})_8(\text{deta})_4$ (110 m^2/g) and $\text{Ce}_2(\text{ac})_6(\text{H}_2\text{O})_3$ (112 m^2/g) (Scheme 1 and Figures S6 and S7).

This can originate from a rather loose arrangement of 1D polymeric structural entities in $\text{Ce}_4(\text{OH})_2(\text{piv})_{10}(\text{H}_2\text{O})_2$ due

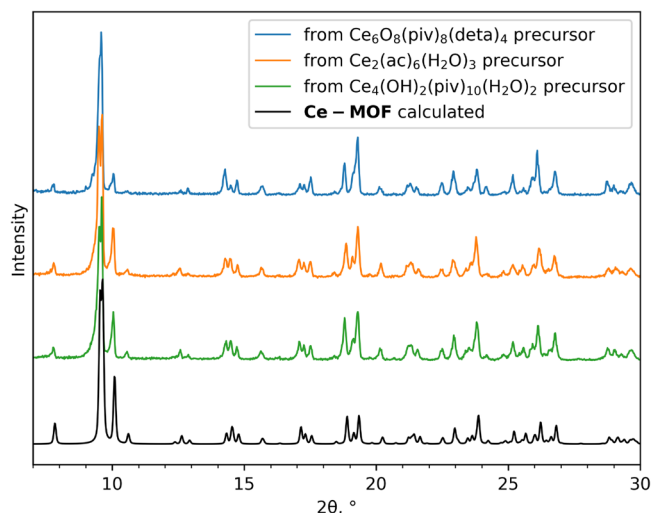


Figure 4. PXRD patterns ($\lambda = 1.5419 \text{ \AA}$) of Ce-MOF samples prepared from various Ce precursors.

to the bulky pivalate ligands or from a different reactivity of the precursors but requires further investigation. Thus, to the best of our knowledge, Ce-MOF having S_{BET} of $222 \text{ m}^2/\text{g}$ shares the second highest reported specific surface area value among Ce^{3+} MOFs with dicarboxylic linkers.^{60,71}

3.4. Crystal Structures of Ce-MOF and Ce-MOF- H_2O .

Ce-MOF crystallizes in the $P2_1/n$ space group, the unit cell contains one symmetrically independent Ce1 atom, and the crystal structure is composed of the centrosymmetric dinuclear $[\text{Ce}_2(\text{bdc})_4]^{2-}$ species (Ce1–Ce1ⁱ separation equals 4.185 \AA) linked by two bridging and two chelate bridging carboxylic groups of four terephthalate anions (bdc^{2-}) (Figure 5 and Figure S8). Each Ce1 is coordinated by O1 and O2 atoms of a chelating bdc^{2-} ion, O3 and O4 atoms of a chelating bridging bdc^{2-} , O5 and O6 atoms of a bridging bdc^{2-} , O3 from another

chelating bridging bdc^{2-} , O7 atom from a terminal bdc^{2-} , and O1S from the coordinated DMF molecule. The ninefold coordination environment of Ce1 is best described as a muffin according to CSHM (continuous shape measures) analysis (Figure S9 and Table S4).⁷⁶ It is worth noting that the geometry of dinuclear $[\text{Ce}_2(\text{bdc})_4]^{2-}$ species is typical for cerium carboxylates and, for instance, occurs in $\text{Ce}_2(\text{bdc})_3(\text{DMF})_2(\text{DMSO})_2$ ⁴⁸ and $\text{Ce}_2(\text{bdc})_2(\text{NMP})_4(\text{ac})_2$ ⁵⁰ MOF structures. However, the presence of a terminal COO group is quite unusual and is due to the formation of ion pairs with $[(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{NH}_2]^+$ cations. The dinuclear $[\text{Ce}_2(\text{bdc})_4]^{2-}$ fragments are joined together into a three-dimensional anionic framework $[\text{Ce}_2(\text{bdc})_4]^{2-\infty}$ by the dicarboxylate terephthalate anions of two types, which are considered as μ_2 and μ_4 connectors (Figure 6).

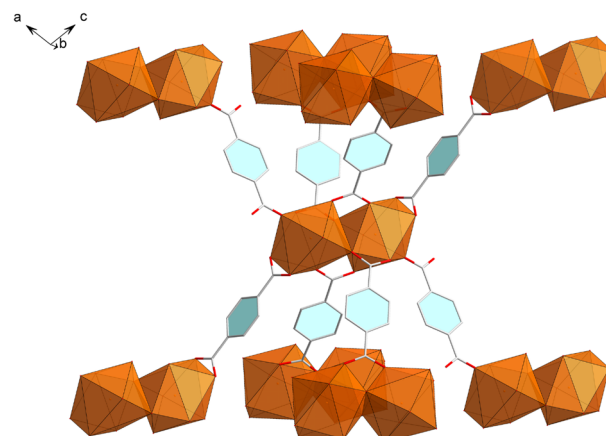


Figure 6. Dinuclear building unit of Ce-MOF surrounded by eight neighbor units as a node of an 8-c topological bcu net.

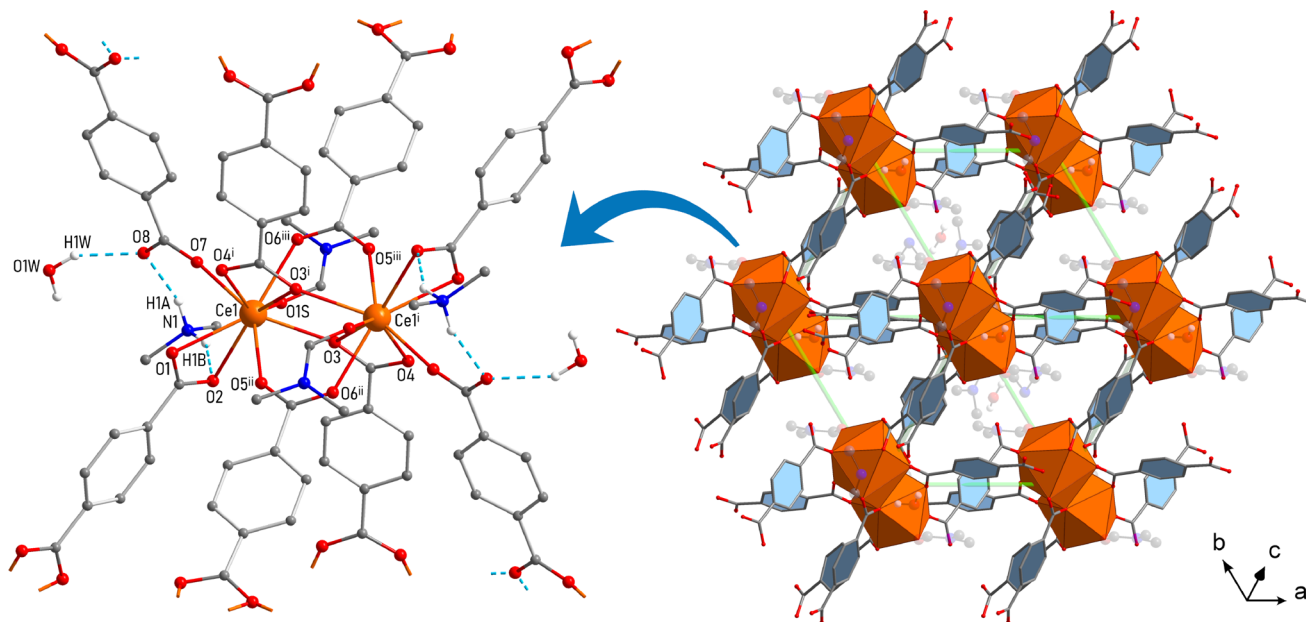


Figure 5. Crystal structure of Ce-MOF. The dinuclear building unit on the left is presented as a ball-and-stick model for clarity; see the SI for the thermal ellipsoid plot of the building unit. Dashed lines show H-bonds. Symmetry codes: (i) $1-x, 1-y, 1-z$; (ii) $1.5-x, 0.5+y, 1.5-z$; (iii) $-0.5+x, 0.5-y, -0.5+z$. Guest molecules on the right are shown as semitransparent for clarity. The right panel shows the view along the channels in the $[111]$ direction. Semitransparent green lines show unit cell edges.

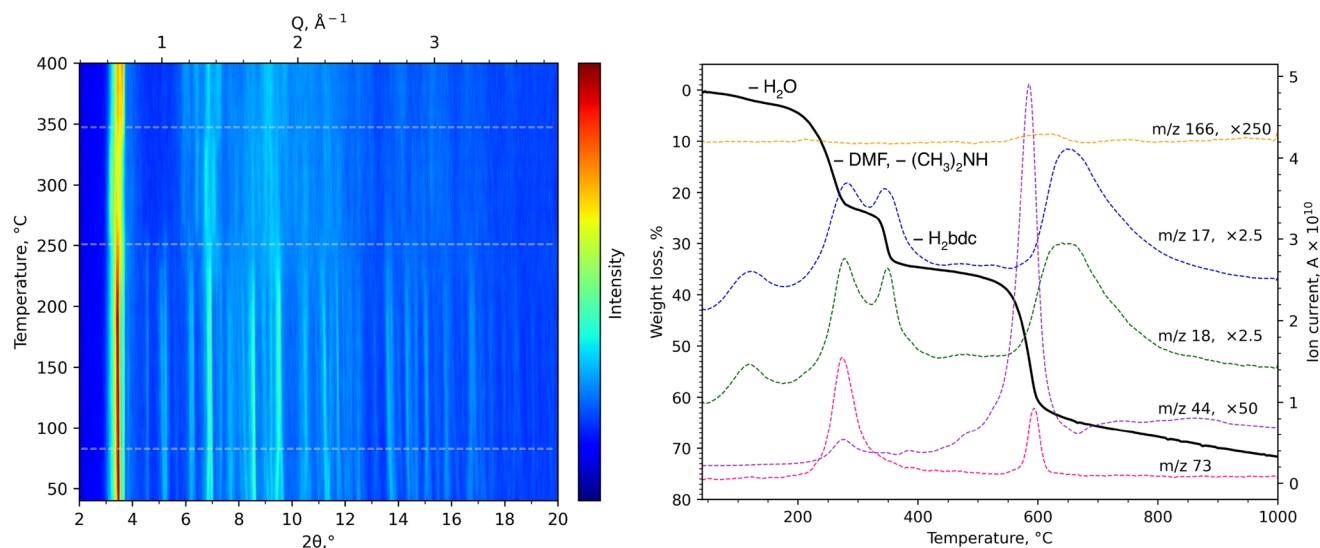


Figure 7. *In situ* PXRD pattern ($\lambda = 0.5594 \text{ \AA}$) of Ce-MOF upon heating in a capillary sealed in vacuum (left). Semitransparent dashed lines divide the temperature range into several stages of the sample evolution. TG curve of Ce-MOF in argon with scaled ionic currents of ions in evolved gas with the respective m/z (right).

The framework features a complex intertwined channel system along the $[1\bar{1}\bar{1}]$ and $[\bar{1}\bar{1}1]$ directions with the largest rhombic aperture of $9.47 \text{ \AA} \times 17.58 \text{ \AA}$ along the diagonals, as calculated from the distances between Ce ions (Figure 5 and Figure S10). Topology analysis of the Ce-MOF crystal structure with ToposPro software⁷⁷ indicates that the structure can be represented as an 8-c net (point symbol $\{4.246^4\}$) of a **bcu**-type topology with Ce_2 building units as nodes (Figure 6 and Figure S11). Porosity analysis of the crystal structure demonstrates the highest porosity of Ce-MOF among the reported Ce^{3+} -based MOFs with a terephthalic linker and the third highest porosity after virtual solvent exclusion (Table 1).

Structural analysis of dehydrated Ce-MOF $^{-\text{H}_2\text{O}}$ demonstrates that removal of water molecules does not affect the crystal structure of the framework substantially (Tables S1 and S2) due to its rigidity and only leads to disorder of dimethylammonium cations and dimethylformamide molecules. Porosity analysis of the crystal structure demonstrates the highest porosity of Ce-MOF among the reported Ce^{3+} -based MOFs with the terephthalic linker and the third highest porosity after virtual solvent exclusion (Table 1).

Crystal structures of Ce-MOF and Ce-MOF $^{-\text{H}_2\text{O}}$ were also determined at room temperature and were demonstrated to have no noticeable differences from the ones at 100 K (Tables S1 and S2). Figure S12 shows the Rietveld refined powder XRD profile of Ce-MOF.

3.5. Thermal Behavior. Since MOFs synthesized under solvothermal conditions usually contain guest solvent molecules in the voids, their desolvation upon heating at moderate temperatures is required to activate the porosity. The thermal behavior of the new Ce-MOF was investigated by means of *in situ* PXRD, TG-DTA with mass spectrometric evolved gas analysis, and total X-ray scattering with PDF analysis. In the process of thermal decomposition of Ce-MOF, several stages can be distinguished. The decomposition begins from the elimination of the weakly bound water molecules ($m/z = 18, 17$) from the pores at $50\text{--}100 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$, the experimental weight loss is 3.1%, which is consistent with the theoretically calculated weight loss of 3.0% (Figure 7 and Figure S13). Judging by the data obtained in the *in situ* PXRD experiment (Figure 7 and

Figure S14), only slight structural changes occur (at Q of ca. 1.4 and 1.8 \AA^{-1}) with most of the peaks retaining their positions and intensity. This is in line with the SC XRD crystal structure of a Ce-MOF $^{-\text{H}_2\text{O}}$.

Upon further heating, DMF and dimethylamine molecules leave the pores on the next stage of weight loss at $250\text{--}275 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ (exp. 22.8%, calcd 22.4%) and appearance of peaks in the mass spectrum with $m/z = 73$ (DMF^+), 44 ($(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{N}^+$), 18 (NH_4^+), 17 (NH_3^+). This corresponds to the major change in PXRD pattern (see detailed view in Figures S15 and S16) manifested in intensity drop and disappearance of several diffraction peaks (e.g., at $0.8\text{--}1 \text{ \AA}^{-1}$). Lighter dimethylamine molecules residing in the pores of the framework are eliminated simultaneously with the heavier coordinated dimethylformamide molecules due to the firm retention in the form of $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{NH}_2^+$ cations by the anionic framework $[\text{Ce}_2(\text{bdc})_4]^{2-}$ and a system of H-bonds. The proton that should remain upon elimination of dimethylamine for charge compensation is supposedly bound to the O8 atom of the terminal bdc^{2-} ligand that acted as the H-bond acceptor from $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{NH}_2^+$ in the as-obtained Ce-MOF.

At ca. $350 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$, one H_2bdc molecule per formula unit is eliminated, leaving the $\text{Ce}_2(\text{bdc})_3$ framework (exp. and calcd weight losses of 36.0%). According to TG-DTA-MS data, the framework exhibits thermal stability up to at least $450 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ in argon while the peaks of m/z 44, 73, and 166 at higher temperatures originate from terephthalic linkers indicating MOF destruction. The argon atmosphere impedes oxidation, and the formation of CeO_2 is only achieved by $1000 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ (exp. and calcd weight losses of 72.0 and 71.6%, respectively). The thermal behavior of Ce-MOF in air demonstrates the same three elimination stages at temperatures of $100\text{--}150$, $200\text{--}250$, and $300\text{--}350 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ while combustion of the framework occurs in the temperature range of $390\text{--}500 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ with the formation of CeO_2 (Figure S17).

To get more insight into the structural changes in Ce-MOF upon heating, we performed total scattering experiments with PDF analysis of as-synthesized Ce-MOF and of the products of its heating at 100 (Ce-MOF $^{-\text{H}_2\text{O}}$), 250 ($[\text{Ce}_2(\text{bdc})_3(\text{H}_2\text{bdc})]$), and $400 \text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ ($[\text{Ce}_2(\text{bdc})_3]$) in a vacuum (Figure 8). The data

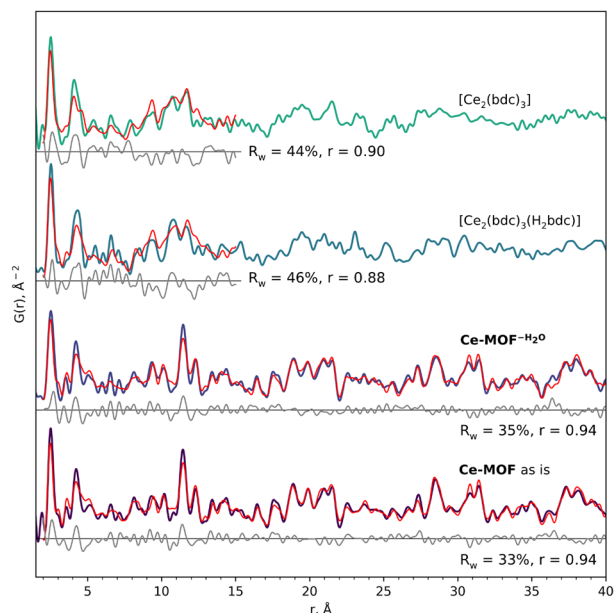


Figure 8. Measured PDF data (shades of blue) of Ce-MOF samples (as is and heated to different temperatures) and refinements (red) with the corresponding periodic models. Difference curves (gray) are offset for clarity. Weighted residual factor R_w and Pearson correlation coefficient r between experimental and fitted curves are shown below the graphs.

were collected according to our previously developed procedure.⁷⁸ See the [Supporting Information](#) for the details on data collection and choice of structure models for the refinements.

The PDFs of Ce-MOF and Ce-MOF^{-H₂O} closely resemble each other, which is reflected in their Pearson correlation coefficient r value of 0.98 (Figure S18) and are well described by the corresponding structure models of Ce-MOF and Ce-MOF^{-H₂O} within a distance range of up to 40 Å, which indicates that the local structure remains unchanged upon elimination of water molecules.

Heating of Ce-MOF up to 250 °C is accompanied by departure of DMF and dimethylamine molecules and leads to formation of [Ce₂(bdc)₃(H₂bdc)], and a substantial change of the structure is expressed in both *in situ* PXRD and PDF data (Figures 7 and 8, respectively). The local structure changes and the peaks corresponding to Ce–Ce distances (e.g., at 11.4 and 28.4 Å) become less pronounced in the PDF of [Ce₂(bdc)₃(H₂bdc)] indicating partial loss of the long-range order. PDF of [Ce₂(bdc)₃] is similar to the one of [Ce₂(bdc)₃(H₂bdc)] with an r value of 0.91.

Due to the change of structure between 100 and 250 °C, the last two PDFs differ significantly from the first two, which is quantitatively expressed in the Pearson correlation coefficient values of ca. 0.7 (Figure S17). At the same time, the two PDFs are fitted rather well with the Ce₃(bdc)_{7.5} model constructed from the Ce₃(bdc)_{7.5}(DMF)₄ crystal structure³¹ by exclusion of DMF within the short distance range up to 15 Å, which points to substantial structure change upon elimination of DMF and dimethylamine and only a minor change between 250 and 400 °C.

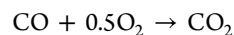
PXRD patterns of Ce-MOF above 350 °C (Figure 7), a previously reported product of Ce5 heating above 275 °C in the N₂ atmosphere,⁷¹ and that of CeO₂@Ce5 above 275 °C (Figure S19) are similar to each other, and these three

substances contain the same modification of Ce₂(bdc)₃. It should be noted that poor crystallinity of that phase hinders the structural study by means of Rietveld refinement; therefore, its crystal structure remains to be determined.

In an oxidizing atmosphere, Ce₂(bdc)₃ is readily oxidized to form nano ceria (Figures S15). The oxidation process depends on the surface area of the initial MOF and thus on the precursor employed. The largest surface area of Ce-MOF is obtained in the case of the Ce₄(OH)₂(piv)₁₀(H₂O)₂ precursor (222 m²/g) and the corresponding Ce-MOF is fully oxidized to CeO₂ at 390 °C, while the Ce-MOF sample synthesized from Ce₂(ac)₆(H₂O)₃ only forms traces of CeO₂ at that temperature and full combustion occurs after heating at a constant temperature of 400 °C for 10 min (Figure S20).

Here, we have also studied the CeO₂@Ce5 composite behavior upon heating in a vacuum (Figure S19). It has been found that nanoceria does not influence thermal decomposition of the Ce5 framework in composite, which loses DMF at 250 °C and undergoes pyrolysis after 475 °C similarly to pure Ce5, while nanoceria gradually crystallizes upon heating.

3.6. Catalytic Performance of MOF-Derived CeO₂. MOFs are widely explored as catalysts for various industrially important processes with the Ce-based ones and their derivatives, e.g., MOF-derived ceria being the most prominent in redox reactions due to the two stable oxidation states of Ce.^{33–36} Many reports point to the high catalytic activity of CeO₂ and its composites in the CO oxidation reaction:^{38,39,79,80}



Less attention was devoted to Ce-based MOFs with only several reported examples indicating high efficiency of these MOFs and corresponding composites.^{81,82}

Preliminary catalytic experiments demonstrated that no activity is exhibited by Ce-MOF and Ce5 per se at lower temperatures and the activation to form the MOF-derived CeO₂ is essential. The Ce-MOF sample with the lowest surface area (112 m²/g) prepared from the Ce₂(ac)₆(H₂O)₃ precursor did not oxidize to CeO₂ under the conditions of the catalytic reaction even at 400 °C but transformed to [Ce₂(bdc)₃] and thus did not exhibit catalytic activity (Figure 9, Figure S21, and Table S5). At the same time, all other MOFs that transformed to CeO₂ *in situ* demonstrate comparable activity with the conversion of CO at the level of ca. 30% corresponding to the 16 mmol h⁻¹ g⁻¹ reaction rate, which is significantly higher than that of bulk CeO₂ (Figure 9). A minor decrease of activity of derived CeO₂ from Ce5, CeO₂@Ce5, and Ce-MOF is in perfect correlation with the decrease of the CeO₂ BET surface area: 224, 188, and 182 m²/g, respectively (Table S5). The only reaction product is CO₂; accordingly, the selectivity for CO₂ is 100%. The material balance of the reaction for carbon calculated from gas chromatography data is 95–98% (Figure S22 and Table S6).

Further studies of the activity and life cycle of the catalyst were performed for Ce-MOF. Since only around 30% conversion of CO was achieved during the preliminary experiments, the loading mass of the catalyst was increased, keeping all other reaction conditions unchanged. The efficiency of the catalyst increases significantly upon *in situ* transformation to CeO₂ at ca. 350 °C on the first cycle (Figure 10), and high CO conversion (80%) is already observed at a temperature of 270 °C on the second cycle. The lifetime of the catalyst was examined, and it demonstrated to maintain its high

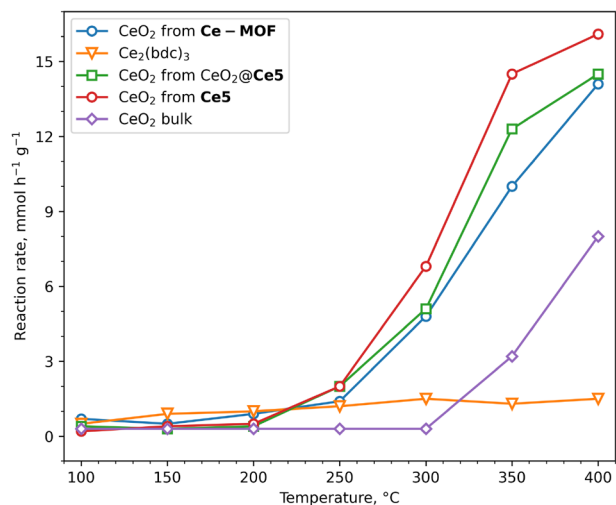


Figure 9. Reaction rate of CO oxidation on catalysts *in situ* derived from Ce-MOF, Ce₅, and CeO₂@Ce₅ per gram of loading. Ce₂(bdc)₃ is formed from Ce-MOF ($S_{\text{BET}} = 112 \text{ m}^2/\text{g}$) synthesized from the Ce₂(ac)₆(H₂O)₃ precursor, while Ce-MOF ($S_{\text{BET}} = 222 \text{ m}^2/\text{g}$) synthesized from the Ce₄(OH)₂(piv)₁₀(H₂O)₂ precursor forms CeO₂. The reaction rate on bulk crystalline CeO₂ is provided for reference. CO:air ratio is 1:4; gas flow is 20 mL/min. Loading mass 0.2 g of sample +0.3 g of quartz.

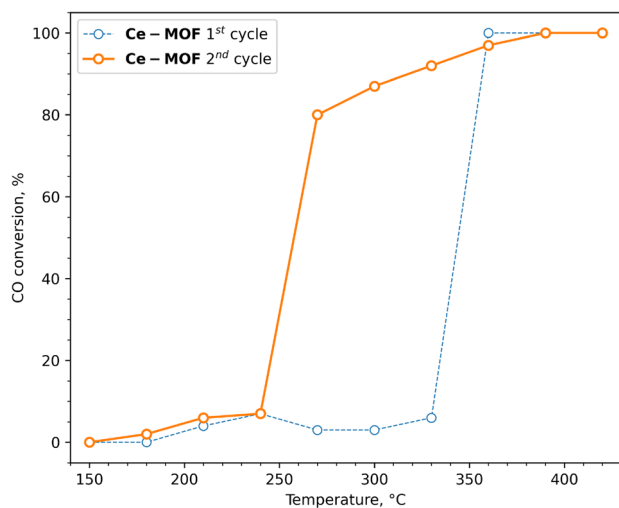


Figure 10. Activity of the catalyst in the CO oxidation reaction. The CO:air ratio is 1:4; the gas flow is 20 mL/min. Loading mass of Ce-MOF 0.4 g. 1st cycle (blue line) corresponds to *in situ* combustion of the loaded Ce-MOF to CeO₂ under the conditions of the catalytic reaction; 2nd cycle (orange line) corresponds to the activity of CeO₂ derived from Ce-MOF for the whole examined temperature range.

efficiency for more than 14 h at 300 °C (Figure S23). The catalytic activity of the Ce-MOF-derived CeO₂ is comparable to the reported catalysts in CO oxidation (Table S7).^{38,39,79,81,82}

4. CONCLUSIONS

To conclude, the novel Ce³⁺-based MOF [(CH₃)₂NH₂]₂[Ce₂(bdc)₄(DMF)₂·2H₂O (Ce-MOF) has been prepared by solvothermal reaction in DMF from various Ce carboxylates with terephthalic acid (H₂bdc) and dimethylamine. The choice of carboxylate precursor did not impact the phase composition; however, it affected the specific surface

area of the obtained material. In the absence of added dimethylamine, the solvothermal reaction leads to the formation of Ce₃(bdc)_{7.5}(DMF)₄ (Ce₅) or its composite CeO₂@Ce₅. It is worth noting that while nano-CeO₂ is hardly visible in PXRD patterns of the composite, its signal dominates the PDF. This highlights the value of total scattering for characterization of the MOFs that could contain amorphous or nanocrystalline admixtures.

Ce-MOF has 3D connectivity of the **bcu** type with a dinuclear fragment connected with eight neighbors and three types of solvate species residing in its pores: water, DMF, and dimethylammonium cation.

The framework retains its integrity upon elimination of water molecules, while departure of DMF and dimethylamine leads to substantial structural transformation, which was evidenced through *in situ* XRD, thermogravimetric analysis, and total scattering experiments with PDF analysis.

Further heating leads to formation of Ce₂(bdc)₃, which is stable up to at least 450 °C in nonoxidative conditions and undergoes combustion after 390 °C to form nano-CeO₂. MOF-derived CeO₂ has a mean crystallite size of ca. 5–6 nm and exhibits catalytic activity in the CO oxidation reaction.

Finally, we developed a synthetic strategy for a new anionic Ce-based MOF formed due to the templating effect of deliberately added dimethylamine. We believe that the proposed approach could pave the way for the synthesis of new anionic MOFs.

■ ASSOCIATED CONTENT

Supporting Information

The Supporting Information is available free of charge at <https://pubs.acs.org/doi/10.1021/acsomega.3c07906>.

Crystal structure and refinement data (ZIP)

Experimental section; synthesis; X-ray crystallography; thermal behavior; and catalytic performance (PDF)

Accession Codes

CCDC 2106041–2106042, 2238303–2238304 contain the supplementary crystallographic data for this paper. These data can be obtained free of charge via www.ccdc.cam.ac.uk/data_request/cif, or by emailing data_request@ccdc.cam.ac.uk, or by contacting The Cambridge Crystallographic Data Centre, 12 Union Road, Cambridge CB2 1EZ, UK; fax: + 44 1223 336033

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Author Contributions

D.T. conceived the idea, secured funding, and supervised the project. D.G. and M.S. synthesized and characterized the compounds. M.Z. enabled access to lab diffractometer for PDF data collection, provided expertise in the field, and contributed to the data analysis and discussion. D.T. and D.G. collected single-crystal and powder diffraction data and solved and refined the crystal structures. A.S., D.G., and D.T. performed the *in situ* PXRD experiments. A.K. and M.T. measured the nitrogen adsorption isotherms and performed catalytic activity studies. I.S. measured and interpreted XANES spectra. D.G. took the lead in writing of the manuscript with contributions from D.T., M.Z., and A.K. All authors have given approval to the final version of the manuscript.

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Notes

The authors declare no competing financial interest.

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