

# Impact of surface mobility in selective oxidation. Isotopic exchange of $^{18}\text{O}_2$ with $^{16}\text{O}_2$ on various oxides: $\text{MoO}_3$ , $\text{SnO}_2$ and $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$ . Effect of a reducer gas

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## Abstract

Isotopic oxygen exchange experiments were carried out on simple oxides ( $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$ ,  $\text{MoO}_3$  and  $\text{SnO}_2$ ) and mechanical mixtures of  $\text{MoO}_3$  or  $\text{SnO}_2$  (acceptor phase) with  $\text{Rh}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  or  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  (donor phase). With  $\text{Rh}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  a synergy effect is found: the amount of oxygen exchanged on the mixture is higher than the sum of oxygen exchanged on the two separate phases. This is a prove of oxygen mobility between donor and acceptor phases. With  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  this effect is less marked suggesting that the presence of a reducer gas is required. In presence of hydrocarbon, no isotopic exchange is observed: only total oxidation occurs. The presence of  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  decreases the rate of total oxidation by blocking, by oxygen spillover, the most active sites for oxidation.

**Keywords:** Remote control; Selective oxidation catalysts; Isotopic oxygen exchange

## 1. Introduction

Catalytic selective oxidations (CSO) are major processes in petrochemistry, for the production of alcohols, ketones, aldehydes and carboxylic acids used in the chemical industry [1]. The catalysts are multifunctional oxides. To explain the synergy effect between two (or more) oxide phases that is generally observed with these catalysts, Delmon and co-workers [2–8]

have proposed a remote control effect based on the following assumptions:

(i) the catalyst is composed of two phases, an acceptor phase (A) and a donor phase (D) having well-defined coupled functions.

(ii) the acceptor phase is the center for hydrocarbon activation and can have, when alone, a low activity in CSO.

(iii) the donor phase generally has no CSO activity. Its role is to produce activated oxygen ( $\text{O}_{\text{sp}}$ ) which spills over to the donor phase, accelerates the catalytic cycle and maintains it at a high rate. The existence of this oxygen spillover ( $\text{O}_{\text{sp}}$ ) has been proved on the  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  +

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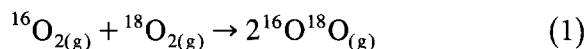
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MoO<sub>3</sub> catalysts, where Sb<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub> is the donor phase and MoO<sub>3</sub> is the acceptor phase. The first study carried out on this catalyst showed that <sup>18</sup>O could be incorporated into acrolein when using mechanical mixtures of Sb<sub>2</sub><sup>18</sup>O<sup>16</sup>O<sub>3</sub> + Mo<sup>16</sup>O<sub>3</sub> for propene oxidation [9]. In a recent study based on Raman spectroscopy experiments [10], it was proved that MoO<sub>3</sub> can slowly exchange with <sup>18</sup>O<sub>2</sub> at moderate temperatures when mixed with Sb<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub> while MoO<sub>3</sub> alone cannot exchange [11].

During the remote control process, the flux of O<sub>sp</sub> from the donor phase D to the acceptor phase A is thought to be lower than the turnover frequency of the reaction: a large part of the gaseous oxygen (referred to as O<sub>d</sub>) can be directly incorporated in the catalytic cycle. A mechanical equivalent of this chemical system is a wheel maintained at a high speed of rotation by small regular impulses. Actually the exact role of O<sub>sp</sub> on the catalytic cycle or on the active site of phase A is not yet known and this point deserves in-depth studies, presently in progress. The aim of this work is to measure by means of oxygen isotopic exchange, the flux of O<sub>sp</sub> species from D phases to A phases.

The exchange of <sup>18</sup>O with <sup>16</sup>O has been studied for many years and a number of reviews dealt with the early works [12–15]. Isotopic exchange reactions allow us to obtain an insight into the mechanisms of oxidation reactions, the nature of oxygen bonds and oxygen mobility at the catalyst surface. The exchange reaction may be studied by mass spectrometry where masses 32 (<sup>16</sup>O<sub>2</sub>), 34 (<sup>16</sup>O<sup>18</sup>O) and 36 (<sup>18</sup>O<sub>2</sub>) are monitored throughout the reaction. There are two types of isotopic exchange:

(i) The first one, named ‘homophase equilibration,’ is an exchange between adsorbed atoms without a participation of the oxygen atoms of the solid [Eq. (1)]. This is the R mechanism of Boreskov and Novakova [14,15]:

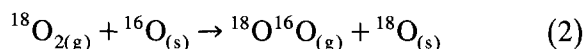


The only role of the solid is to catalyse the dissociation of adsorbed oxygen species. The

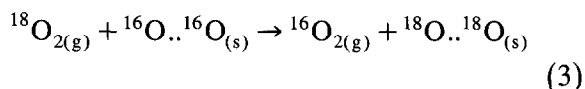
concentration of isotopic oxygen in each phase, gas and solid, does not change during the reaction.

(ii) The second one, named ‘heterophase exchange,’ concerns the exchange of gas phase <sup>18</sup>O<sub>2</sub> with <sup>16</sup>O of the solid oxide and may be sub-divided into two groups according to the mechanism:

\* Monomolecular or Simple Exchange: (mechanism R' in [14,15]) one oxygen atom of the gas phase is exchanged with one atom of the solid surface [Eq. (2)]:



\* Bimolecular or Multiple Exchange: (mechanism R'' in [14,15]) both oxygen atoms of the molecule of dioxygen are exchanged at once with two oxygen atoms of the solid surface [Eq. (3)]:



Both mechanisms involve three principal steps which are: dissociative adsorption of molecular oxygen, exchange of the adsorbed atoms or ions with ions from the oxide and associative desorption of molecular oxygen.

The research strategy is based upon the measurement of <sup>18</sup>O<sub>2(g)}/<sup>16</sup>O<sub>(s)</sub> isotopic exchange on D and A oxides. Two donor type oxides (Sb<sub>2</sub>O<sub>4</sub>, Rh/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>) and two acceptor type oxides (MoO<sub>3</sub>, SnO<sub>2</sub>) were used. Although it is not a selective oxidation catalyst, Rh/Al<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> was investigated because it is one of the most powerful oxygen donor [16,17]. It allows us to study the behavior of acceptor phases (MoO<sub>3</sub>, SnO<sub>2</sub>) in the presence of spillover oxygen. The first part of this paper is devoted to in-depth studies of <sup>18</sup>O<sub>2(g)}/<sup>16</sup>O<sub>(s)</sub> exchange of the individual oxides. The second part of this paper will deal with oxygen exchange on D + A mechanical mixtures. Amounts of spillover oxygen (O<sub>sp</sub>) will be deduced from the excess of oxygen exchanged in the mixtures. In the third part of this paper we will examine the effect of a reducer</sub></sub>

gas (methane and propene) onto oxygen isotopic exchange with simple oxides and then with D + A mechanical mixtures.

## 2. Experimental

### 2.1. Materials

Studies have been carried out on three oxides  $\text{MoO}_3$ ,  $\text{SnO}_2$ ,  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$ , and a supported metal catalyst  $\text{Rh}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ . The oxides were prepared by sol–gel method ( $\text{MoO}_3$ ), precipitation ( $\text{SnO}_2$ ) and calcination ( $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$ ) [18,19]. They were calcined at 800°C for 4 h except  $\text{MoO}_3$  (600°C for 4 h). The 0.05 wt%  $\text{Rh}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  metal catalyst was prepared by impregnation of  $\alpha\text{-Al}_2\text{O}_3$  (Rhône Poulenc SCS 9) with the required volume of an aqueous Rh nitrate solution. The sample was dried at 120°C and calcined at 450°C for 4 h in air. Single point BET measurements were carried out on both fresh and calcined samples.

### 2.2. Isotopic exchange experiments

Isotopic exchange experiments were carried out in a recycle reactor coupled to a mass spectrometer described elsewhere [20]. Pre-calcined samples (0.5 g) were oxidised in-situ at 450°C for 15 min, they were then outgassed at 450°C for 15 min. Pure  $^{18}\text{O}_2$  (100 or 50 mbar for heterophase exchange) or an equimolecular mixture of  $^{18}\text{O}_2 + ^{16}\text{O}_2$  (50 mbar of each for homophase equilibration) was then introduced to the recycle system and the partial pressures  $P_{32}$  ( $^{16}\text{O}_2$ ),  $P_{34}$  ( $^{16}\text{O}^{18}\text{O}$ ) and  $P_{36}$  ( $^{18}\text{O}_2$ ) were monitored by mass spectrometry throughout the reaction.

Two kinds of isotopic heteroexchange experiments ( $^{18}\text{O}_{2(g)}/^{16}\text{O}_{(s)}$ ) were done: (i) temperature programmed exchanges (TPE) conducted on simple oxide phases between 25 and 800°C (except for  $\text{MoO}_3$ : 600°C) at a rate of 2°C/min, (ii) isothermal exchanges (IE) carried out at 500°C onto simple oxides and D + A mechani-

cal mixtures. Homoexchange experiments ( $^{18}\text{O}_{2(g)}/^{16}\text{O}_{2(g)}$ ) were carried out at 500°C. The whole calculations that allow us to determine the rates of exchange and the numbers of oxygen species exchanged during TPE and IE experiments are described in a previous work [20].

To study the possible effect of a reducer on the rate of exchange, a 1:1 mixture of  $^{18}\text{O}_2$  and hydrocarbon was introduced on the sample at 500°C. The hydrocarbon conversion was followed by mass 16 for methane and mass 41 for propene.

## 3. Results and discussions

### 3.1. Surface area measurements

Surface areas are given in Table 1.  $\text{MoO}_3$  sample was found to be unstable above 600°C. Sublimation occurs at 800°C in flowing air, and crystals were found on the wall of the reactor at the outlet in accordance to previous works [21,22].  $\text{SnO}_2$  was found to be stable keeping a BET area of 5 m<sup>2</sup> g<sup>-1</sup> even at 800°C. No change in the total surface area was observed with  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  before and after calcination. However the initial area of this sample was very low.

### 3.2. Isotopic oxygen exchange on simple oxides

Fig. 1 gives isotopic exchange profiles (TPE) for each simple oxide, where the partial pressures  $P_{32}$  ( $^{16}\text{O}_2$ ), and  $P_{34}$  ( $^{16}\text{O}^{18}\text{O}$ ) are plotted

Table 1  
Oxides surface area versus calcination temperature

Samples	BET area (m <sup>2</sup> g <sup>-1</sup> ) vs. $T_{\text{calc}}$			
	Fresh	600°C	700°C	800°C
$\text{MoO}_3$	1.6	1.0	0.5 <sup>a</sup>	
$\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$	0.7		0.7	0.7
$\text{SnO}_2$	5.1		5.0	5.0
$\alpha\text{-Al}_2\text{O}_3$	7.6			7.6
$\text{Rh}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$	7.6			7.6

<sup>a</sup> Sample calcined in static air.

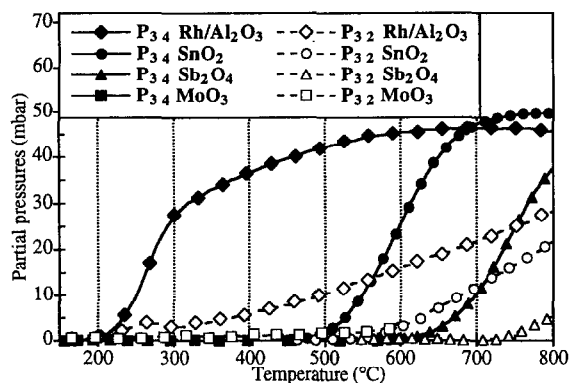


Fig. 1. Temperature programmed exchange on simple oxide phases.

against temperature. From these data, the temperature range of oxygen exchange for each oxide and the mechanisms involved could be deduced from the evolution of the partial pressure of each product ( $^{16}\text{O}_2$  and  $^{16}\text{O}^{18}\text{O}$ ).

### 3.2.1. $\text{MoO}_3$

Isotopic exchange experiments were conducted between 25 and 600°C only on  $\text{MoO}_3$  because of the instability of the sample at higher temperatures. No significant isotopic exchange was observed between 25 and 600°C (see Fig. 1), even after reduction at 500°C. The sample was then left at 600°C for approximately 1 h to see if an exchange process occurs, indeed a very slow exchange was observed. An isothermal study conducted at 600°C over  $\text{MoO}_3$  degassed at 25°C, confirmed that exchange occurs on this sample, however in this experiment a slow increase of mass 34 was observed. This increase shows that oxygen exchange onto  $\text{MoO}_3$  follows a very slow  $\text{R}'$  mechanism. On the other hand,  $\text{MoO}_3$  was shown to catalyse the homophase equilibration at 600°C.  $\text{MoO}_3$  is thus capable of dissociating gaseous oxygen at a

significant rate but  $\text{O}_{\text{ads}}$  cannot easily exchange with oxygen atoms of  $\text{MoO}_3$ .

### 3.2.2. $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$

TPE experiments conducted between 25 and 800°C show that isotopic exchange is incomplete within this temperature range (Fig. 1).  $^{18}\text{O}^{16}\text{O}$  appears at 640°C attesting that oxygen exchange proceeds by  $\text{R}'$  mechanism on  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  (650–800°C).

### 3.2.3. $\text{SnO}_2$

This sample was found to be the most active oxide studied. Exchange occurs between mass 36 and 34 with some contribution of mass 32 at higher temperatures (Fig. 1). An exchange temperature of 450–520°C has been reported by Winter [13]. Indeed we observed that isotopic exchange starts at 450°C with the appearance of mass 34, indicative of an  $\text{R}'$  mechanism and above 550°C (Fig. 1) the increase of mass 32 is indicative of an  $\text{R}''$  mechanism as previously observed [23]. An isothermal study conducted at 500°C over  $\text{SnO}_2$  allows us to measure the slope of mass 34 (see Table 2) and the number of oxygen exchanged (Fig. 2).

### 3.2.4. $\text{Rh}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$

As expected on this rhodium supported sample, oxygen exchange occurs at very low temperature (200°C) following the  $\text{R}'$  mechanism predominantly. This mechanism is imposed by the presence of rhodium oxide particles supported onto alumina that act as a porthole for oxygen exchange [16]. On the other hand alumina is known to present a high oxygen mobility [20] and this sample will be an excellent oxygen donor phase in the following experi-

Table 2

Mass 34 slopes for simple and mechanical mixtures of oxides measured (see Fig. 2)

Sample composition	$\text{SnO}_2$	$\text{Rh}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$	$\text{Rh}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3 + \text{MoO}_3$	$\text{Rh}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3 + \text{SnO}_2$	$\text{Rh}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3 + \text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$	$\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4 + \text{MoO}_3$	$\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4 + \text{SnO}_2$
Initial $P_{34}$ slope ( $\text{mbar min}^{-1}$ )	0.02	0.06	0.09	0.15	0.10	n.a. <sup>a</sup>	0.03

<sup>a</sup> Not available: value too small to be accurate.

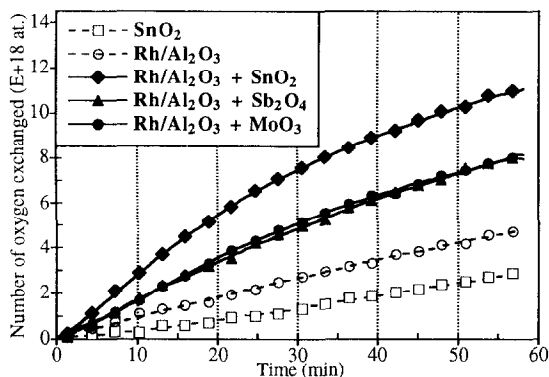


Fig. 2. Evolution of the number of oxygen exchanged at 500°C with time over simple phase samples (10 mg  $\text{Rh/Al}_2\text{O}_3$  and 90 mg oxide) and mechanical mixtures (10 mg  $\text{Rh/Al}_2\text{O}_3$  + 90 mg oxide).

ments. An isothermal study conducted at 500°C over this sample allows us to measure the slope of mass 34 (see Table 2) and the number of oxygen exchanged (Fig. 2).

### 3.3. Isotopic oxygen exchange on donor + acceptor mechanical mixtures

With  $\text{Rh/Al}_2\text{O}_3$  as donor, the mixtures were made with 10 mg of donor phase and 90 mg of acceptor phase while with  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  as donor, the mixtures were made with 90 mg of each phase. When alone,  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  and  $\text{MoO}_3$  are inactive at 500°C while  $\text{Rh/Al}_2\text{O}_3$  and  $\text{SnO}_2$  exchange oxygen at this temperature according to the heterophase  $R'$  mechanism. The mixtures also exchange by the simple mechanism and hence only the slopes of mass 34 were reported in Table 2. To evaluate the flux of  $\text{O}_{\text{sp}}$  on these samples the evolution of the number of oxygen exchanged versus time at 500°C are represented in Fig. 2.

#### 3.3.1. Mechanical mixtures with $\text{Rh/Al}_2\text{O}_3$ as donor phase

It can be seen from Fig. 2 that the increase in the amount of oxygen exchanged is more significant over the mixture formed between  $\text{Rh/Al}_2\text{O}_3$  and  $\text{SnO}_2$ . Moreover the number of oxygen atoms exchanged on this mixture is

higher than the sum of oxygen exchanged recorded on separate phases. This fact proves an actual synergy effect between  $\text{Rh/Al}_2\text{O}_3$  and  $\text{SnO}_2$ . The amounts of oxygen exchanged in the mixtures  $\text{Rh/Al}_2\text{O}_3 + \text{MoO}_3$  and  $\text{Rh/Al}_2\text{O}_3 + \text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  are higher than on  $\text{Rh/Al}_2\text{O}_3$  alone even though  $\text{MoO}_3$  and  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  are inactive alone. These observations provide evidence of oxygen mobility between donor and acceptor oxides in these mechanical mixtures. Compared to the sum of oxygen exchanged on the two separate phases, the  $\text{O}_{\text{sp}}$  flux is about  $6.3 \times 10^{17}$  atom  $\text{min}^{-1} \text{g}^{-1}$  for  $\text{Rh/Al}_2\text{O}_3 + \text{SnO}_2$  sample and about  $6.2 \times 10^{17}$  atom  $\text{min}^{-1} \text{g}^{-1}$  for  $\text{Rh/Al}_2\text{O}_3 + \text{MoO}_3$  and  $\text{Rh/Al}_2\text{O}_3 + \text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  samples.

#### 3.3.2. Mechanical mixtures with $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$ as donor phase

A very slow isotopic exchange was observed at 500°C for mixtures formed with the donor oxide  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  and the acceptor oxides  $\text{SnO}_2$  or  $\text{MoO}_3$  (Table 2). Concerning the flux of  $\text{O}_{\text{sp}}$ , the amount of oxygen exchanged with  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  as donor phase is just little upper (8%, i.e.  $0.45 \times 10^{17}$  atom  $\text{min}^{-1} \text{g}^{-1}$ ) than when  $\text{SnO}_2$  is alone (Fig. 3). In the mixture  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4 + \text{MoO}_3$  a very slow exchange is observed ( $\text{O}_{\text{sp}}$  flux about  $1.7 \times 10^{17}$  atom  $\text{min}^{-1} \text{g}^{-1}$ ). Oxygen migration was observed for mechanical mixtures  $\text{Sb}_2^{18}\text{O}^{16}\text{O}_3 + \text{Mo}^{16}\text{O}_3$  in propene oxidation ex-

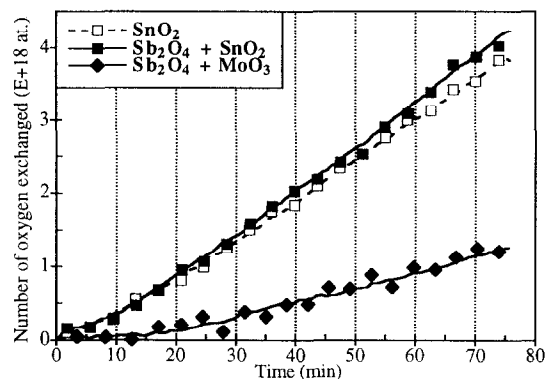


Fig. 3. Evolution of the number of oxygen exchanged at 500°C with time over simple oxide (90 mg  $\text{SnO}_2$ ) and mechanical mixtures (90 mg  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  + 90 mg oxide).

periments by Weng et al. at 400°C [9]. In this latter case, the apparent rate of  $^{18}\text{O}$  insertion in the products (acrolein,  $\text{CO}_x$ ) was largely higher than the rate of exchange measured on the  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4 + \text{MoO}_3$  mixture. Two essential differences between the experimental conditions of [9] and those of the present study can explain the results: (i) the presence of large amounts of  $^{18}\text{O}$  on the donor (while here, the donor has to activate molecular  $^{18}\text{O}_2$ ) and (ii) the presence of a reducer which can act as a driving force for oxygen migration. So we will now examine the exchange behavior of the mechanical mixtures in the presence of methane and propene as a reducer gas.

### 3.4. Effect of a reducer gas on isotopic exchange

To study the influence of the reducer (methane or propene) on the oxygen exchange, the oxide phases  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$ ,  $\text{SnO}_2$  and  $\text{MoO}_3$  were first tested alone prior to the mechanical mixtures. The results could not be quantified in terms of % conversion due to the recycle system used, but the initial evolution of the product partial pressures allows us to estimate which are the major and the primary products on each sample.

#### 3.4.1. Reaction with methane as reducer gas

Contrarily to what was expected, no isotopic exchange was observed here (no  $^{16}\text{O}^{18}\text{O}$  nor  $^{16}\text{O}_2$ ). On  $\text{SnO}_2$ , methane oxidation was extremely fast, more than 90% of the  $^{18}\text{O}_2$  being consumed within the first 10 min of reaction. The major products observed are  $\text{C}^{18}\text{O}_2$  and  $\text{C}^{18}\text{O}^{16}\text{O}$ .  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  is inactive in the exchange reaction at 500°C and small quantities of  $\text{CO}$  and  $\text{C}^{18}\text{O}$  are observed in reaction with methane, and again no oxygen exchange is observed. On  $\text{MoO}_3$  no exchange nor oxidation is observed at 500°C.

$\text{MoO}_3$  alone or the mixture  $\text{MoO}_3 + \text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  are inactive neither in isotopic exchange nor in methane oxidation at 500°C. When  $\text{SnO}_2$  is

Table 3

Initial slope ( $\text{mbar min}^{-1}$ ) for methane oxidation on simple and mechanical mixtures at 500°C

Sample composition	$\text{C}^{16}\text{O}_2$	$\text{C}^{16}\text{O}^{18}\text{O}$	$\text{C}^{18}\text{O}_2$
$\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$	0.01	0.005	0.01
$\text{SnO}_2$	1.4	1.7	2.4
$\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4 + \text{SnO}_2$	1.0	1.2	0.95

mixed with  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$ , the oxidation reaction appears to be slower and again no oxygen exchange is observed. The major reaction products are again  $\text{C}^{18}\text{O}_2$  and  $\text{C}^{18}\text{O}^{16}\text{O}$ . Most of the oxygen is consumed within 30 minutes of the reaction (slower than that observed for  $\text{SnO}_2$  alone). The decrease in the rate of total methane oxidation when the donor phase is mixed with  $\text{SnO}_2$  (see Table 3) could be interpreted by a deactivation of the active sites for total oxidation on  $\text{SnO}_2$ . This agrees with the general result of the decrease of the conversion and the increase of the selectivity in selective oxidation when the donor phase is mixed with the acceptor one [2,24]. It seems then that the presence of the donor phase ( $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$ ) increases the oxidation selectivity of  $\text{SnO}_2$  by decreasing its activity in total oxidation. This deactivating effect could be due to a reoxidation of the partially reduced sites on  $\text{SnO}_2$  with  $\text{O}_{\text{sp}}$  from  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$ .

#### 3.4.2. Reaction with propene as reducer gas

With propene all the simple oxide phases display activity in oxidation. Only total oxidation and no exchange are observed. The activity order for the different oxides is  $\text{SnO}_2 > \text{MoO}_3 > \text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$ . The major reaction products over  $\text{SnO}_2$  are  $\text{C}^{18}\text{O}_2$  and  $\text{C}^{18}\text{O}^{16}\text{O}$  and minor products are  $\text{C}^{18}\text{O}$ ,  $\text{C}^{16}\text{O}$  and  $\text{C}^{16}\text{O}_2$ . The amounts of  $\text{C}^{18}\text{O}_2$  and  $\text{C}^{18}\text{O}$  produced decrease after about 20 min of reaction and the amounts of  $\text{C}^{18}\text{O}^{16}\text{O}$ ,  $\text{C}^{16}\text{O}$  and  $\text{C}^{16}\text{O}_2$  continue to rise. On  $\text{MoO}_3$  the major products formed is  $\text{C}^{18}\text{O}$ , while it is  $\text{C}^{16}\text{O}$  over  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  (Fig. 4).

Concerning mechanical mixture  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4 + \text{SnO}_2$ , the same activity as  $\text{SnO}_2$  alone is observed and contrarily to previous work [25], no

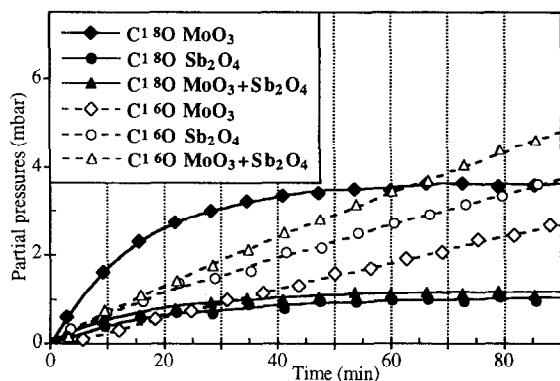


Fig. 4. Evolution of the major products formed during reaction at 500°C in presence of propene over simple oxide (90 mg) and mechanical mixtures (90 mg  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  + 90 mg  $\text{MoO}_3$ ).

acrolein formation was observed due to the high temperature (500°C). On the  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  +  $\text{SnO}_2$  sample, the most significant difference is that the decrease of  $\text{C}^{18}\text{O}_2$ , observed after about 25 min is clearly accompanied by an increase of  $\text{C}^{16}\text{O}_2$  although all the initial amount of  $^{18}\text{O}_2$  in gas phase is consumed. This fact could be interpreted as a re-exchange of carbon dioxide on oxide surface [23]. This secondary reaction is not observed on  $\text{SnO}_2$  alone. The behavior of the mechanical mixture  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  +  $\text{MoO}_3$  is similar to that of  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  (Fig. 4). For these samples, the major difference is based on the oxidation mechanism: on the mixture, as on  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  alone,  $\text{C}^{16}\text{O}$  is the major product contrarily to  $\text{MoO}_3$  those products mainly  $\text{C}^{18}\text{O}$ . As for reaction in presence of methane,  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  decreases the rate of the total oxidation. Moreover, on  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  containing samples, oxidation occurs with surface oxygen species ( $\text{O}_{\text{sp}}$ ) by contrast with  $\text{MoO}_3$  alone, where it is gaseous oxygen ( $\text{O}_\text{d}$ ) that acts as oxidant.

#### 4. Conclusion

Even if  $\text{MoO}_3$  and  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  are inactive for isotopic exchange at 500°C, evidence of oxygen mobility was observed by an increase in the amount of oxygen exchanged ( $\text{O}_{\text{sp}}$  flux), between the acceptor oxides and the donor

$\text{Rh}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ . The most significant result was obtained for the mixture formed between  $\text{Rh}/\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$  and  $\text{SnO}_2$ , where a synergy effect was clearly demonstrated. No definite effect could be observed with  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  based mixtures. The amount of oxygen exchanged is practically the same in the  $\text{SnO}_2$  +  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  mixture as in  $\text{SnO}_2$  alone. However, it seems that  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  promotes a very slow oxygen exchange on  $\text{MoO}_3$ .

The introduction of a reducer (methane or propene) with  $^{18}\text{O}_2$  only resulted in complete oxidation of the hydrocarbon. On simple oxide phases, with methane and propene  $\text{SnO}_2$  is the most active oxide. Concerning reaction over mechanical mixtures, the major fact is that the oxidation of methane over the  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$  +  $\text{SnO}_2$  mixture was slower than that observed with  $\text{SnO}_2$  alone. This deactivating effect could be explain by a blockage of the most active sites of  $\text{SnO}_2$  for total oxidation, probably by oxygen spillover from  $\text{Sb}_2\text{O}_4$ . The most interesting consequence of this fact is an increase in selective oxidation by decreasing the rate of total oxidation on this mechanical mixture.

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