## **Electronic supplementary information**

## Conversion of cellulose into lactic acid using zirconium

## oxide catalysts

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**Fig. S1** Cellulose conversion using a ZrO<sub>2</sub> catalyst at 453 K as a function of reaction time. Reaction conditions: 0.5 g ball-milled cellulose, 1 g ZrO<sub>2</sub> (ZRO-7), 50 g water.



**Fig. S2** Cellulose conversion using a ZrO<sub>2</sub> catalyst at 463 K as a function of reaction time. Reaction conditions: 0.5 g ball-milled cellulose, 1 g ZrO<sub>2</sub> (ZRO-7), 50 g water.



**Fig. S3** Cellulose conversion using a ZrO<sub>2</sub> catalyst at 483 K as a function of reaction time. Reaction conditions: 0.5 g ball-milled cellulose, 1 g ZrO<sub>2</sub> (ZRO-7), 50 g water.



Fig. S4 XRD patterns of ZrO<sub>2</sub> samples.



Fig. S5 Profiles of temperature-programmed desorption of NH<sub>3</sub> on ZrO<sub>2</sub> samples.



Fig. S6 Profiles of temperature-programmed desorption of CO<sub>2</sub> on ZrO<sub>2</sub> samples.