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# Elaboration and thermal study of iron—phosphorus-substituted dicalcium silicate phase

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#### Abstract

In the present work, we examine the simultaneous effect of iron and phosphorus additions on the calcium carbonate decomposition in  $CaCO_3$ ,  $SiO_2$ ,  $Fe_2O_3$  and  $P_2O_5$  mixtures at the molar ratio  $CaCO_3/SiO_2 = 2$ . The formation of the dicalcium silicate  $Ca_2SiO_4$  is also studied. The temperatures of the decarbonation and the enthalpy evolution during the heating of the mixtures are measured. The additions of  $Fe_2O_3$  and  $P_2O_5$  oxides decrease the onset temperature of the  $CaCO_3$  decomposition. The energy consumption of decarbonation at about 835 °C is lowered when the dopant concentrations increase. Synthesized solid solutions are analyzed by X-ray diffraction (XRD) and scanning electron microscopy (SEM). The free-lime quantity is determined by chemical analysis. The mineralogical analysis at room temperature of the products of the reaction shows the presence of iron–phosphorus-doped  $\beta$ ,  $\alpha'$  and  $\alpha$ - $C_2S$  modifications.

Keywords: Calorimetry; Thermal analysis; X-ray diffraction; Ca2SiO4; SEM

#### 1. Introduction

The theoretical energy consumption during the formation of the industrial clinker at 1450 °C is about 1605 J/g of clinker [1]. The major part of this energy is consumed during the endothermic process of calcium carbonate decomposition in raw meal. One of the main aims of the cement industry is to reduce this energy consumption. Several authors have already studied the influence of minor elements that are present or added to the raw meal on the CaCO $_3$  decomposition and the formation of the clinker phases [2–10].

The dicalcium silicate  $Ca_2SiO_4$  ( $C_2S$ ) is one of the main components of the Portland cement. It constitutes 15 to 30 wt.% of clinker and presents five allotropic forms:  $\alpha$ ,  $\alpha'_H$ ,  $\alpha'_L$ ,  $\beta$  and  $\gamma$  [11,12]. The  $\beta$  form is metastable under 500 °C and is hydraulically active. On the contrary, the  $\gamma$  stable form at ambient temperature is inactive towards water reaction. The  $\alpha$ ,  $\alpha'_H$ ,  $\alpha'_L$  forms are stabilized at room temperature by the incorporation in their structures of foreign ions [12–16]. In

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common Portland clinkers, the belite phase  $C_2S$  is generally in the  $\beta$  form at room temperature [6].

In the literature, few systematic studies are devoted to the energy behaviour of the dicalcium silicate formation from initial mixtures of calcium carbonate and quartz in the presence of specific elements such as iron and phosphorus.

Iron oxide Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> is considered as the main flux in the clinker manufacture. It reduces the clinkerisation temperature and activates the solid-state reactions [17]. Weisweiler et al. [18] studied the effect of Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> on the phase equilibrium in a CaO-SiO<sub>2</sub> system. They showed that the C<sub>2</sub>S phase is predominant at temperatures ranging 1100–1400 °C. Above 1400 °C, CaO.SiO<sub>2</sub> (CS) or the glassy phase CaO.2SiO<sub>2</sub> (CS<sub>2</sub>) is the main observed phase. Less quantities of 3CaO.2SiO<sub>2</sub> (C<sub>3</sub>S<sub>2</sub>) and 3CaO.SiO<sub>2</sub> (C<sub>3</sub>S) are also present. Regourd [19] studied the distribution of minor elements in the calcium silicates of industrial clinkers. She indicated that the iron maximal concentration is ranging 1–1.3 wt.% in belite C<sub>2</sub>S and 0.6 wt.% in alite C<sub>3</sub>S.

The  $P_2O_5$  effect on the stability of the calcium silicates in Portland clinker has already been investigated [20–24]. It has been shown that a high level of phosphorus inhibits the  $C_3S$  formation. Diouri et al. [25–27] showed that the substitution of  $SiO_4^{4-}$  by  $PO_4^{3-}$  ions stabilizes the high temperature forms  $\alpha'$  and  $\alpha'_L$ - $C_2S$ .

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In this paper, we investigate the simultaneous influence of iron and phosphorus inclusions on the  $CaCO_3$  decarbonation and the  $C_2S$  formation in  $CaCO_3-SiO_2$  mixtures around the molar ratio  $CaCO_3/SiO_2=2$ . The decarbonation temperature is measured by differential thermal analysis. The enthalpy variations of the reaction at various temperatures are carried out by isothermal calorimetry. The synthesized solid solutions are characterized by X-ray diffraction (XRD) and scanning electron microscopy (SEM). Free lime is determined by chemical analysis.

# 2. Experimental

The starting materials are CaCO<sub>3</sub> provided by UCB (Brussels, Belgium), SiO<sub>2</sub>, Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> and (NH<sub>4</sub>)<sub>2</sub>HPO<sub>4</sub> by Merck (Darmstadt, Germany) with >99% purity. They are ground in an agate mortar with ethanol as dispersive medium. The chemical reaction for the synthesis can be written as:

$$(2-2x)$$
CaCO<sub>3</sub> +  $(1-x)$ SiO<sub>2</sub>+ $x/2$ Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> +  $x(NH_4)_2$ HPO<sub>4</sub>  
 $\rightarrow (Ca_{2-2x}$ Fe<sub>x</sub> $\Box_x)(Si_{1-x}P_x)$ O<sub>4</sub> +  $(2-2x)$ CO<sub>2</sub><sup>x</sup>  
+  $2xNH_3^x$  +  $3x/2H_2$ O<sup>x</sup>

# $\Box$ : Cationic vacancy of Ca<sup>2+</sup>.

Stoechiometric mixtures for  $0 \le x \le 0.20$  are the subject of the present investigation. They are as quoted B(FeP)x, and the corresponding chemical compositions in wt.% oxides are reported in Table 1. One part of the mixtures is devoted to differential thermal analysis and enthalpy measurements. The other part is slowly heated between 300 and 1000 °C by steps of 100 °C. Between each heat treatment, the products are reground and homogenized in presence of ethanol. Finally, the mixtures are pelletized, heated at 1400 °C during 24 h and rapidly quenched under air atmosphere.

The reactions of decarbonation and calcium silicates formation are observed by differential thermal analysis from room temperature to 1400  $^{\circ}$ C, at a constant rate of 10  $^{\circ}$ C min  $^{-1}$  under air atmosphere. The sample's masses used are in the range 300–400 mg.

Enthalpy variations are measured by isothermal calorimetry using a high-temperature Tian Calvet calorimeter. The sensors consist of two thermopiles constituted by hundreds of thermocouples Pt/Pt-Rh 13% [28]. Samples of about 30

mg are dropped at ambient temperature into the calorimetric cell, which is brought at various successive temperatures. At each temperature, the enthalpy variation is determined by time integration of the instantaneous heat flux over the whole duration of the occurring phenomenon. The atmosphere is argon. The calorimeter is standardized by drops of  $\alpha$  alumina provided by the U.S. NBS laboratory [29], the enthalpy variations of which between ambient and experimental temperatures are well known.

The synthesized solid solutions at 1400 °C are analyzed by XRD using a D-5000 diffractometer at the Cu  $K_{\alpha}$  radiation. Free lime in the final products is determined by the classical ethylene glycol method [30]. Finally, the textures of the final products are examined by SEM on gold metallized powders.

#### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Differential thermal analysis

The thermograms corresponding to the mixtures for x = 0 to 0.20 are reported in Fig. 1.

A double endothermic peak at 150 °C is only observed for the doped samples, the importance of which increases as the dopant concentrations increase. It is attributed to the  $(NH_4)_2HPO_4$  decomposition [31]. The DTA thermogram realized on pure  $(NH_4)_2HPO_4$  confirms this observation. The endothermic peak, located around 569 °C, is relative to the quartz  $(\beta) \rightarrow$  quartz  $(\alpha)$  transition [1,9].

The main endothermic effect is attributed to the decarbonation reaction the characteristic temperatures, which are reported in Table 1 and plotted in Fig. 2. The onset temperature of the calcium carbonate decomposition decreases as the concentrations of  $Fe_2O_3$  and  $P_2O_5$  increase. For all the concentrations, the peak area that corresponds to nearly the same energy is almost identical, but its maximum decreases with the dopant concentration. The relative kinetics of the reactions becomes thus lower.

An exothermic effect is observed after the decarbonation reaction and goes up to 1400 °C for the B(FeP)0 and B(FeP)0.05 starting mixtures. For x = 0.10 and 0.20, this effect ends at 1350 °C.

An endothermic effect occurs at around 1420  $^{\circ}$ C and is especially evident for the x=0.10 and 0.20 compositions. It may correspond to a partial fusion of the sample.

Table 1 Chemical compositions (wt.% oxide) and specific temperatures of the decarbonation step (reported from DTA curves) of the B(FeP)x starting mixtures

B(FeP)x samples	CaO	SiO <sub>2</sub>	Fe <sub>2</sub> O <sub>3</sub>	P <sub>2</sub> O <sub>5</sub>	Onset temperature	Maximum temperature peak	Final temperature
B(FeP)0	65.12	34.88	0.00	0.00	709	898	920
B(FeP)0.05	62.25	33.34	2.33	2.07	685	889	914
B(FeP)0.10	59.34	31.79	4.69	4.17	665	884	909
B(FeP)0.20	53.42	28.62	9.50	8.45	624	884	908

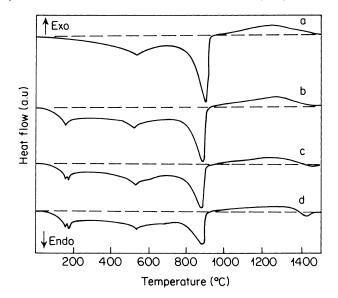


Fig. 1. DTA thermograms of starting samples: (a) B(FeP)0, (b) B(FeP)0.05, (c) B(FeP)0.10 and (d) B(FeP) 0.20.

It is the highest for the iron—phosphorus-rich compositions and is likely due to the flux effect of the iron oxide. This effect, which is added to the exothermic effect, lowers the maximum temperature of the previous exothermic reaction.

#### 3.2. Enthalpimetry

The enthalpy variations of starting mixtures B(FeP)x at the temperatures ranging 683-957 °C are reported in Table 2 and plotted in Fig. 3.

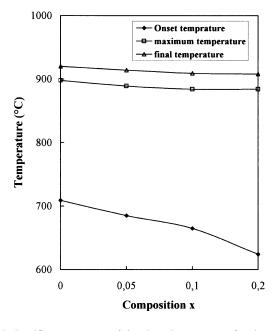


Fig. 2. Specific temperatures of decarbonation step as a function of the composition x of the B(FeP)x starting samples.

In the pure sample B(FeP)0, the decomposition reaction of  $CaCO_3$  starts around 734 °C and goes up to 957 °C. The same evolution is observed for the B(FeP)0.05 sample. For the B(FeP)0.10 and B(FeP)0.20 samples, the decarbonation starts under 734 °C.

Around 835 °C, the enthalpy variations decrease gradually with the increase of x. The lower measured value (1930.7 J/g) corresponds to the B(FeP)0.20 starting mixture. At 957 °C, they seem to be almost constant with a slow minimum at x = 0.05.

After each set of drop enthalpy measurements, the powders resulting from the reactions in the calorimeter, at 957 °C, are analyzed by XRD. Taking into account that the whole experiment duration is for each set of measurement of about 10 h, it can be considered that the analyzed phases are the results of almost complete reactions. The corresponding patterns are given in Fig. 4. The B(FeP)0 sample is essentially constituted by the CaO and SiO<sub>2</sub> oxides. SiO<sub>2</sub> is present in two forms:  $\alpha$  quartz and  $\alpha$  cristobalite. Very weak peaks of the CS and  $C_3S_2$  phases are also detected. For the x=0.05 composition, the same products after reaction are observed. The analysis of the B(FeP)0.10 sample shows the onset crystallization of  $C_2S$  under the  $\beta$  form. Moreover, a decrease in those of CS and  $C_3S_2$  are observed. A small

Table 2 Enthalpy variations (J/g) of the B(FeP)x starting mixtures versus temperature

B(FeP)x samples	Temperature (°C)					
	683	734	835	957		
B(FeP)0	741.2	846.4	2202	3196.3		
B(FeP)0.05	767.5	862.1	2189.8	3056.3		
B(FeP)0.10	831.9	972.9	2174.8	3154.7		
B(FeP)0.20	959	1230.4	1930.7	3200.4		

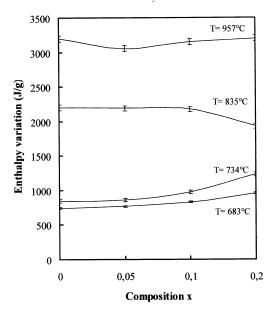


Fig. 3. Enthalpy variations versus of the composition x of the B(FeP)x starting mixtures.

quantity of the ferrite phase CaO.Fe $_2$ O $_3$  (CF) is also identified. For the B(FeP)0.20 sample, this later phase appears instead of the  $\beta$ -C $_2$ S.

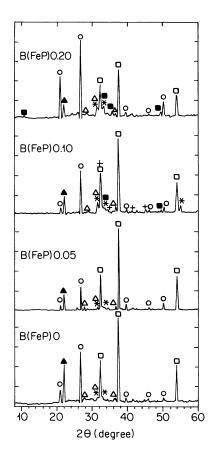


Fig. 4. XRD patterns of B(FeP)x starting materials, heated in the calorimeter at 957 °C. Symbols:  $\Box$  CaO,  $\bigcirc$  SiO<sub>2</sub> (quartz  $\alpha$ ),  $\blacktriangle$  SiO<sub>2</sub> (cristobalite  $\alpha$ ), \* C<sub>3</sub>S<sub>2</sub>, +  $\beta$ -C<sub>2</sub>S,  $\Delta$  CS and  $\blacksquare$  CF.

Table 3 Crystalline phases identified by X-ray diffraction in the B(FeP)x-synthesized samples at 1400  $^{\circ}{\rm C}$ 

B(FeP)x samples	γ-C <sub>2</sub> S	β-C <sub>2</sub> S	α'-C <sub>2</sub> S	α-C <sub>2</sub> S
B(FeP)0	+	+++	_	_
B(FeP)0.05	_	+++	_	_
B(FeP)0.10	_	_	+++	_
B(FeP)0.20	_	_	0	+++

<sup>+++=</sup> abundant; ++= medium; += little; o= traces; -= absent.

# 3.3. High-temperature mineralogy

The identified crystalline phases appearing after a heat treatment up to 1400 °C are semiquantitatively estimated for the B(FeP)x samples. The results are given in Table 3, and the corresponding X-ray patterns are reported in Fig. 5.

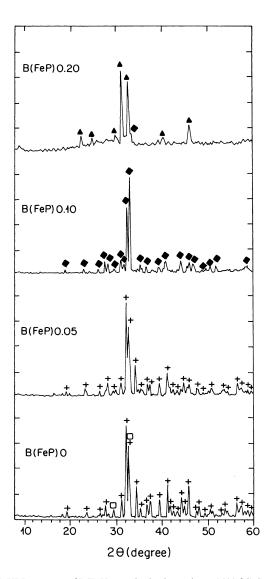


Fig. 5. XRD patterns of B(FeP)*x*-synthesized samples at 1400 °C. Symbols:  $\Box$   $\gamma$ -C<sub>2</sub>S, +  $\beta$ -C<sub>2</sub>S,  $\spadesuit$   $\alpha'$ -C<sub>2</sub>S and  $\spadesuit$   $\alpha$ -C<sub>2</sub>S.

In the pure sample B(FeP)0, the most predominant phase is  $\beta\text{-}C_2S$ . A little quantity of  $\gamma\text{-}C_2S$  is also identified. In the B(FeP)0.05 sample, only the allotropic form  $\beta\text{-}C_2S$  is stabilized. On the B(FeP)0.10 pattern, only the  $\alpha'\text{-}C_2S$  phase is observed. For the B(FeP)0.20 sample, the high-temperature polymorph  $\alpha\text{-}C_2S$  is mostly stabilized with traces of  $\alpha'\text{-}C_2S$ .

#### 3.4. Free lime analysis

The free-lime quantity is determined chemically in the solid solutions treated at 1400 °C. No free lime is detected in the  $Fe_2O_3$  and  $P_2O_5$  doped samples. In the nondoped composition, the quantity of free lime is measured at 0.45 wt.%.

# 3.5. SEM observations

The B(FeP)0 and B(FeP)0.10 samples are observed by SEM. The corresponding micrographs are reported, respectively, in Figs. 6 and 7.

The micrograph of B(FeP)0 presents only belite with a mean grain size of  $2-3~\mu m$ . These grains exhibit rounded or oval forms, as it has been already observed by other authors [15,32]. The belite grains are joined, present a random dispersion and do not exhibit microcracks on their surfaces.

 $\alpha'\text{-}C_2S$  crystals, the size of which do not exceed  $2\text{--}4~\mu\text{m}$ , are observed in the B(FeP)0.10 corresponding micrograph. Indeed, the crystal surface presents irregular forms with microcracks as grain boundaries. These observations are in agreement with the conclusions of Weisweiler et al. [18]. These authors have also observed grain boundaries in iron-doped belite.

A vitreous phase surrounding the grain of belite is observed in the micrograph of the B(FeP)0.10 sample. An annealing at  $1000~^{\circ}\text{C}$  of this sample exhibits the crystallization of that glassy phase identified by XRD as CS<sub>2</sub>. It was

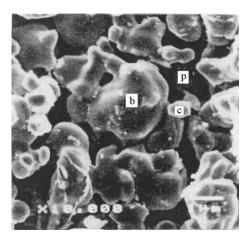


Fig. 6. Micrograph of the B(FeP)0 sample heated at 1400 °C. b—belite grain ( $\beta$ -C<sub>2</sub>S), p—pore of the structure, c—free CaO.



Fig. 7. Micrograph of B(FeP)0.10 sample heated at 1400 °C. b—belite crystallite ( $\alpha'$ -C<sub>2</sub>S);  $\rightarrow$  grain boundaries.

already reported in the literature that the presence of  $Fe_2O_3$  in a  $CaO-SiO_2$  system could induce similar observation [18].

#### 4. Discussion

The Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> and P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> additions induce a reduction of the onset decarbonation temperature from 709 to 624 °C, respectively, for Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>/P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> ratios ranging from 2.33/2.07 to 9.50/8.45 wt.% in CaO/SiO<sub>2</sub>  $\approx$  2 mixtures. In the study of Qotaibi et al. [7], it was already observed that the increase of the  $Cr_2O_3$  and  $P_2O_5$  quantities in  $CaO/SiO_2 \approx 2$  mixtures leads to a decrease of the onset temperature of CaCO<sub>3</sub> decomposition from 711 to 647 °C. Ahluwalia and Mathur [9] have shown that the presence of the transition element oxides Cr<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub>, TiO<sub>2</sub> and Mn<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> in a CaCO<sub>3</sub>-SiO<sub>2</sub> (2:1) system decreases the onset temperature of decarbonation when the concentrations of additives increase from 0.1 to 1 wt.%. The study carried out by Agarwal et al. [33] on the simultaneous effect of CaCl2 and MgCO3 on the decarbonation reaction showed that the 2.2 wt.% Cl and 2.2 wt.% MgO addition leads to the decrease in decarbonation temperature of about 48 °C. It can be compared with the present study where the temperature decrease is about 85 °C.

The exothermic effect observed after the end of the B(FeP)*x* samples decarbonation is mainly attributed to the crystallization of the CS, C<sub>3</sub>S<sub>2</sub> and C<sub>2</sub>S phases [1,8,9]. Indeed, the formation of C<sub>2</sub>S beyond 1000 °C results from a reaction between the intermediate phases CS, C<sub>3</sub>S<sub>2</sub> and CaO [1]. The reaction between the CaO produced from the decarbonation of CaCO<sub>3</sub> and SiO<sub>2</sub> occurs in solid state by the diffusion of the Ca<sup>2+</sup> ions through the layer formed by the products of the CaO–SiO<sub>2</sub> reaction around the silica grain. C<sub>3</sub>S<sub>2</sub> and CS are preferentially formed on the core of the SiO<sub>2</sub> grains and C<sub>2</sub>S at the open interface.

The increase of the enthalpy variations at 734 °C of doped compositions is in agreement with the DTA results, which shows that the endothermic reaction of decarbonation starts below 734 °C for higher iron and phosphorus oxides contents. The enthalpy variations at 835 °C apparently

decrease versus x, and a minimal value is observed for x = 0.20. At the highest temperature, the enthalpy variation remains also apparently constant within the error margin. The mean experimental scatter increases with the temperature. The values for the 683 and 734 °C are normal for this kind of experiments; both the others become abnormal all the more great because the temperature is high. Such a large scatter occurs when the heat production in the cell is not reproducible. It is especially the case at 957 °C, where the kinetics of the exothermic reactions of formation of the CS, C<sub>3</sub>S<sub>2</sub> and C<sub>2</sub>S silicates [1,8,9] are very low because they involve matter diffusion for completion. During the calorimetric observation (about 20 min), the reaction cannot be completely achieved. The DTA measurements show that the maximum rate of these exothermic reactions is at least around 1200 °C, which lies 250 °C over the highest temperature for the enthalpy measurements. All these consistent observations lead to avoid drawing precise conclusions from these last results. Nevertheless, a tendency to a decrease of the enthalpy variation (about 10%) for high values of x is credible.

The X-ray analysis of the B(FeP)0 to B(FeP)0.20 samples heated at 957 °C in the calorimeter shows that the Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> and P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> oxides promote the crystallization of the intermediate phases CS, C<sub>3</sub>S<sub>2</sub> and, consequently,  $\beta$ -C<sub>2</sub>S. This observation is consistent with the fact that the Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> oxide transforms the quartz crystals into very reactive cristobalite at temperature ranging from 800 to 1000 °C [6]. This last phase then reacts easily with the CaO of the raw mixture to give the calcium silicate phases.

The present mineralogical study of the B(FeP)x samples shows that at room temperature the iron and phosphorus doped C<sub>2</sub>S is stabilized in the  $\beta$ ,  $\alpha'$  and  $\alpha$  forms for additions less than 9.50 wt.% Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> and 8.45 wt.% P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>. The evolution of the allotropic forms of belite versus x, for  $0.05 \le x \le 0.20$ , agrees with previous studies on the effect of P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub>. The authors have shown that the increase of P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> concentrations induces the stability of C<sub>2</sub>S forms according to the sequence  $\beta \to \alpha' \to \alpha$  [7,34].

In the XRD pattern, the peaks of synthesized  $\beta$ ,  $\alpha'$  and  $\alpha$  iron–phosphorus-doped dicalcium silicate occur at higher  $2\theta$  values compared with the pure  $C_2S$  forms showed in the literature by several authors [6,19]. Thus, in the structure of  $C_2S$ , the iron ions can be located in the octahedral sites in substitution of calcium ions [35] and phosphorus, as  $PO_4$  entities can replace the  $SiO_4$  groups [25–27]. The ionic radius of  $Fe^{3+}(0.64 \text{ Å})$  and  $P^{5+}(0.35 \text{ Å})$  are, respectively, smaller than that of  $Ca^{2+}(0.99 \text{ Å})$  and  $Si^{4+}(0.42 \text{ Å})$  [36]. That induces a contraction of doped  $C_2S$  lattice.

In this work, the  $\beta\text{-}C_2S$  phase is the only stabilized phase at the 2.33 wt.%  $Fe_2O_3$  and 2.07 wt.%  $P_2O_5$  concentrations. Matkovich and Young [21] have found that the addition of 1.42–2.27 wt.%  $P_2O_5$  stabilizes both the  $\beta$  and  $\alpha'$  forms. In the other hand, the  $Fe_2O_3$  addition induces the only formation of the  $\beta$  form [35]. Consequently, for the B(FeP)0.05 composition, the presence of  $Fe_2O_3$  inhibits the stabilizing

effect of  $P_2O_5$  on the  $\alpha'$ - $C_2S$  formation. Beyond this composition, the phosphorus effect is predominant.

The absence of free lime in the  $C_2S$ -doped solid solutions is due to the known flux effect of  $Fe_2O_3$  and  $P_2O_5$  oxides in clinkerisation reactions [17,20]. These oxides lead to the decrease of the melting point of the mixtures and, thus, the increase of the liquid phase amount, which make easier the diffusion of CaO in  $SiO_2$  grains.

The SEM observations of the B(FeP)0 and B(FeP)0.10 samples show that the iron and phosphorus incorporations induce microcraking at grain boundaries on the grain surface of dicalcium silicate. This is consistent with the increase of the hydraulic reactivity of  $C_2S$  that has been already reported by several authors [37–39].

# 5. Conclusion

In CaCO<sub>3</sub>–SiO<sub>2</sub> (2:1) reacting mixtures, the onset temperature of decarbonation decreases with Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> and P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> additions of, respectively, less than 9.50 wt.% and 8.45 wt.%. The corresponding reduction of temperature decarbonation is about 85 °C. At the temperature of about 835 °C, the energy consumption during the decomposition reaction of CaCO<sub>3</sub> decreases about 12%, with the increase of iron and phosphorus concentrations. The mineralogical analysis of the synthesized solid solutions (Ca<sub>2 - 2x</sub>Fe<sub>x</sub> $\Box_x$ ) (Si<sub>1 - x</sub>P<sub>x</sub>)O<sub>4</sub> shows the formation of  $\beta$ ,  $\alpha'$  and  $\alpha$  belite modifications. For the only (Fe<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> 2.33–P<sub>2</sub>O<sub>5</sub> 2.07 wt.%) composition, the presence of iron oxide inhibits the formation of the  $\alpha'$  form, which will have to be stabilized by the phosphorus oxide. Beyond this composition, the phosphorus effect is predominant.

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