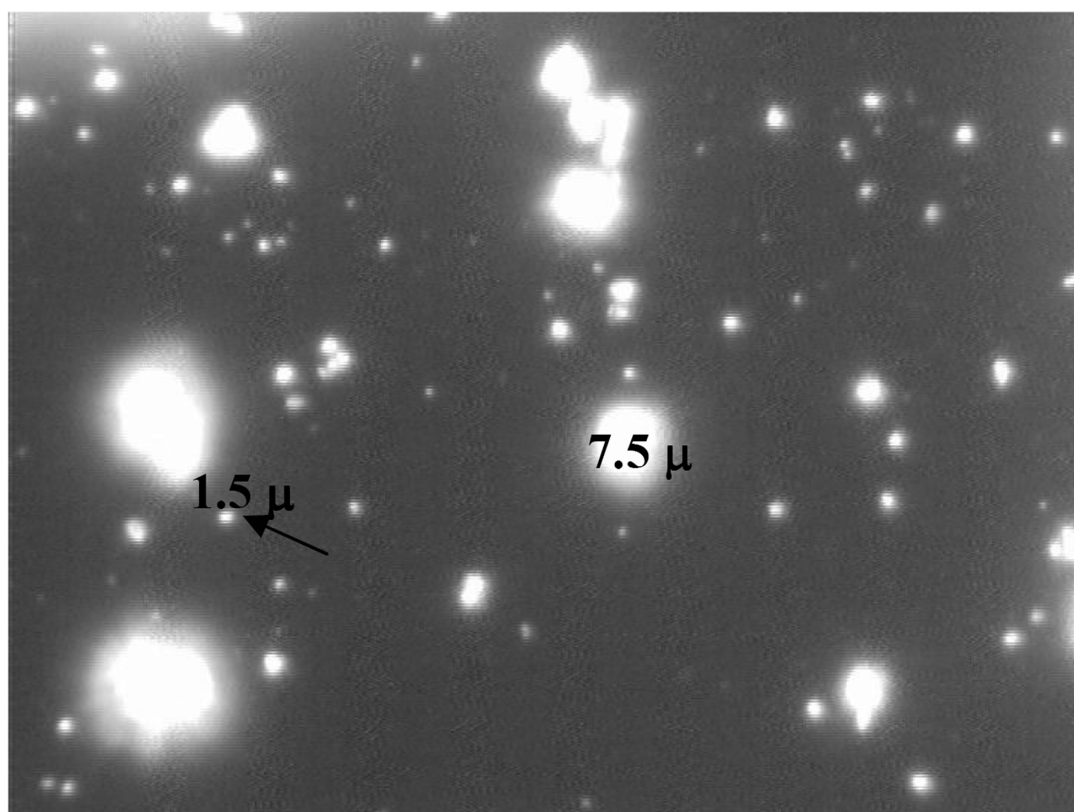


Typical micrograph of particles of matrix M



The optical microscope employed to capture the images was a Leika DM-RX with a CCD gray scale camera, connected to a Pentium type computer equipped with a frame grabber board, thus allowing the digital recording of microscope images. Then, the images were processed using Scion Corporation ScionImage software. The spatial scales of the images were calibrated by comparison with the image of a 1 mm grid.