



HAL
open science

On Cr₂N precipitation mechanisms in high nitrogen austenite

Patrícia Almeida Carvalho, Izabel Fernanda Machado, Guillermo Solorzano,
Angelo Fernando Padilha

► **To cite this version:**

Patrícia Almeida Carvalho, Izabel Fernanda Machado, Guillermo Solorzano, Angelo Fernando Padilha.
On Cr₂N precipitation mechanisms in high nitrogen austenite. *Philosophical Magazine*, 2008, 88 (02),
pp.229-242. 10.1080/14786430701805590 . hal-00513850

HAL Id: hal-00513850

<https://hal.science/hal-00513850>

Submitted on 1 Sep 2010

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.



On Cr₂N precipitation mechanisms in high nitrogen austenite

Journal:	<i>Philosophical Magazine & Philosophical Magazine Letters</i>
Manuscript ID:	TPHM-07-Nov-0316
Journal Selection:	Philosophical Magazine
Date Submitted by the Author:	04-Nov-2007
Complete List of Authors:	Carvalho, Patrícia; Instituto Superior Tecnico, Departamento de Engenharia de Materiais Machado, Izabel; EPUSP, Mechanical Systems Solorzano, Guillermo; PUC-RIO, Materials Science Padilha, Angelo; EPUSP, Mechanical Systems
Keywords:	nitrides, transmission electron microscopy
Keywords (user supplied):	austenitic steels, discontinuos precipitation, twin fronts



On Cr₂N precipitation mechanisms in high nitrogen austenite

P. A. CARVALHO*†, I. F. MACHADO‡, G. SOLÓRZANO§, A. F. PADILHA¶

†IST, Department of Materials Engineering, Av. Rovisco Pais, 1049-001 Lisboa, Portugal

‡EPUSP, Department of Mechatronics and Mechanical Systems Engineering, Av. Prof. Mello Moraes, 2231, 05508-900 São Paulo, S.P. Brazil

§PUC-RIO, Department of Materials Science and Metallurgy, R. Marquês de São Vicente, 225, 22453-900 Rio de Janeiro, R.J. Brazil

¶EPUSP, Department of Metallurgical and Materials Engineering, Av. Prof. Mello Moraes 2463, 05508-900, São Paulo, S.P. Brazil

Precipitation mechanisms in a high-nitrogen (0.87 wt.%) fully austenitic 25Cr-5Ni (wt.%) steel have been studied after ageing at 900°C and 960°C. Ageing induced discontinuous precipitation of Cr₂N from grain boundaries, discontinuous precipitation at twin fronts, continuous precipitation throughout the matrix, continuous precipitation in association with ferrite plate formation and also grain boundary precipitation in the form of both discrete precipitates and films.

The observed morphologies at the onset of discontinuous precipitation from grain boundaries suggest a Tu and Turnbull initiation mechanism. The orientation relation between Cr₂N and γ in well-developed lamellae is not strictly (111) γ //(0001)Cr₂N and $[\bar{1}\bar{1}0]\gamma//[\bar{1}\bar{1}00]$ Cr₂N. The fact that the process shows some orientation tolerance, together with the lamellae irregular and curved interfaces, indicates that minimization of the system interfacial energy does not play a key role during growth. In this precipitation mechanism,

1
2
3
4 twinning inside growing γ lamellae is associated with abrupt local changes in the growth
5
6 direction.
7
8

9
10 In the case of cooperative growth at incoherent twin fronts, the irregular habit surfaces of
11 Cr_2N point to a Fournelle and Clark type of initiation mechanism. At early precipitation
12 stages, the interlamellar spacing for cooperative growth at twin fronts is similar to the one
13 observed for cooperative growth from grain boundaries ($\sim 100\text{nm}$). It is proposed that the low
14 growth efficiency observed at twin fronts results from lower diffusivity conditions at twin
15 fronts as compared with grain boundaries.
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23

24
25 Key words: Austenitic steels, nitrides, discontinuous precipitation, twin fronts, transmission
26 electron microscopy.
27
28
29
30
31

32 **1. Introduction**

33
34 In a supersaturated alloy, volume or continuous precipitation (CP) tends to compete with
35 cellular or discontinuous precipitation (DP). The question of which mechanism predominates
36 depends on the mobility and density of discontinuous reactions fronts as well as on the
37 incubation periods for each mechanism. As the temperature increases, bulk diffusion becomes
38 faster favouring volume precipitation [1,2] and, as a result, close to the solvus temperature CP
39 prevails [3]. Under precipitation regimes where DP dominates, any previous or concomitant
40 volume precipitation reduces the amount of chemical driving energy available for both
41 initiation and propagation of DP.
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52

53
54 Discontinuous precipitation is a nucleation and growth solid-state transformation
55 involving grain boundary migration into adjacent supersaturated grains. The transformation
56 produces two-phase cells consisting of alternate lamellae (or rods) of a precipitated phase in a
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4 solute depleted matrix. The accepted initiation mechanisms for DP are the ‘pucker
5
6 mechanism’ of Tu and Turnbull [4,5] and the Fournelle and Clark mechanism [6]. Both treat
7
8 DP initiation within the general framework of grain boundary migration. In the ‘pucker
9
10 mechanism’ an embryo, developing at an angle with respect to a grain boundary (GB), causes
11
12 the boundary to be locally deflected by the torque term associated with the interfacial tension
13
14 balance at the triple point. If the interfacial energy conditions are favourable, the GB tends to
15
16 migrate until the higher energy broad face is incorporated in the lower interfacial energy grain
17
18 (figure 1 (a)). The process is iterated to form a group of parallel precipitates. Although this
19
20 mechanism has been proven operative, it is critically dependent on the crystallographic
21
22 orientation across the GB and on the habit planes of the precipitates, and is hence not
23
24 universal. In the Fournelle and Clark mechanism, precipitation occurs on an already moving
25
26 boundary. The GB is locally pinned but still allowed to continue migrating between the
27
28 precipitates (figure 1 (b)). In contrast with the previous, this mechanism does not require any
29
30 especial interfacial energy conditions, and is probably operating whenever no preferential
31
32 matrix/precipitate habit plane can be observed which, is generally the case (for reviews see
33
34 refs [7-9]).
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42

43 The growth process associated with DP in alloys containing both interstitial and
44
45 substitutional solutes is distinct from the pattern observed in binary substitutional systems. In
46
47 these systems the material transport is caused exclusively by interfacial diffusion at the
48
49 reaction front and therefore the composition of the untransformed matrix and the velocity of
50
51 the reaction fronts remain constant [7-9]. On the other hand, in interstitial/substitutional
52
53 systems the key factor governing the compositional redistribution is the difference between the
54
55 partitioning processes of the two types of solutes. In these conditions although diffusion of the
56
57 substitutional solute at the reaction front is the rate-controlling effect at the initial stages of
58
59
60

1
2
3
4 precipitation, long-range volume diffusion of the interstitial solute is the essential aspect at the
5
6 later stages [10]: the fast long-range interstitial diffusion reduces the supersaturation of the
7
8 untransformed matrix, decreasing the migration rate of the reaction front and widening the
9
10 interlamellar spacing. This means that no steady-state is reached, in contrast with binary
11
12 substitutional alloys.
13
14

15
16 Although Cr_2N precipitation can occur continuously in austenitic stainless steels, at high
17
18 nitrogen supersaturations lamellar colonies (“false pearlite”) formed by a DP reaction tend to
19
20 predominate at temperatures around 900°C [11-16]. Nevertheless, at later precipitation stages
21
22 long-range volume diffusion of nitrogen induces retardation of new nucleation events and
23
24 inhibition of active reaction fronts that eventually cease to migrate. This results in incomplete
25
26 decomposition even though the matrix may still be supersaturated in nitrogen and the reaction
27
28 driving force is not equal to zero [10,13,15,16].
29
30
31
32

33
34 Discontinuous precipitation in multi-component systems involving both substitutional
35
36 and interstitial solutes, such as high nitrogen austenitic stainless steels, is still not fully
37
38 investigated. In particular, little attention has been given to initiation and growth mechanisms
39
40 in nitride precipitation. Furthermore, competition between Cr_2N precipitation mechanisms and
41
42 its association with other phase transformations require further analysis. The purpose of this
43
44 work is to study the decomposition of a nitrogen austenite, aiming at a more extensive
45
46 understanding of precipitation mechanisms.
47
48
49
50

51 52 53 54 **2. Materials and methods**

55
56 Nitrogen has been added to a standard type duplex stainless steel DIN W.-Nr.1.4460
57
58 by pressurized electroslag remelting [13]. The resulting steel was received in the form of a
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

forged bar with the following composition (wt.%): 25.1Cr; 1.9Mo; 5.5Ni; 1.5Si; 1.20Mn; 0.03C and 0.87N. Chromium nitride precipitation occurs in the current steel up to 1050°C [11], therefore the solution annealing treatment had to be carried out at higher temperatures. On the other hand, the stability domain of ferrite starts at temperatures as low as 1300 °C, and annealing at higher temperatures results in duplex microstructures [11]. Annealing at 1250 °C presented the best compromise to achieve complete dissolution of nitrides and to simultaneously guarantee the absence of ferrite. The as-received material was solution annealed at 1250°C for 1 hour and subsequently water quenched. Solution annealed samples were aged at 900 °C for 90 s and at 960°C for 2 h, followed by water quenching.

Crystal structures and lattice parameters of the predominant phases have been determined by X-ray diffraction (XRD) using CuK α 1. The average grain size of the annealed austenite was determined using the linear intercept method in optical micrographs. The lattice parameters of the annealed and aged (960°C for 2 h) austenite were determined with the least-squares method using (222), (400), (331) and (420) reflections. The amount of ferromagnetic phases was measured by magnetic induction using a Fischer Magnetoscope®M11D with a 0.1% vol. ferrite detection limit.

Preliminary observation of the microstructures was performed by scanning electron microscopy (SEM) with a Hitachi S2400 instrument after standard metallographic preparation. TEM samples have been prepared by grinding 3 mm discs down to 100-150 μ m of thickness, followed by either (i) electropolishing in 100 ml perchloric acid (60%), 200 ml glycerine and 700 ml methanol at -30 °C with 0.3 to 0.4A for a few seconds; or by (ii) double-side dimpling down to 20 μ m of thickness and ion-milling with argon to electron transparency. TEM observations were carried out using a PHILIPS microscope at 120 kV, a JEOL 200C microscope at 200 kV and a Hitachi H-8100 instrument operated at 200 kV, which was

1
2
3
4 equipped for Energy Dispersive Spectroscopy (EDS) with a Si(Li) detector protected by a
5
6 polymeric window. Microdiffraction experiments and EDS analyses were performed with a 15
7
8 nm probe diameter.
9

10 11 12 13 14 **2. Results and discussion**

15
16
17 Magnetic induction measurements, XRD and SEM observations showed the absence
18
19 of ferrite in the solution annealed material [11]. The annealed austenite presented an average
20
21 grain size of 65 μm and a 0.3622₅ nm lattice parameter. The TTT diagram previously
22
23 obtained using metallographic observations, X-ray diffraction and magnetic induction [11]
24
25 enabled to expect the presence of Cr_2N in the austenitic matrix for the short ageing treatment
26
27 (90 s at 900°C), whereas both Cr_2N and ferrite should be present after the longer ageing
28
29 treatment (2 h at 960 °C) [11].
30
31
32
33

34 35 **2.1 Discontinuous vs continuous Cr_2N precipitation**

36
37
38 Electron microscope observations revealed that ageing for 2 h induced the competition
39
40 of discontinuous vs continuous precipitation mechanisms. DP resulted in an extensive
41
42 presence of lamellar colonies, with well-defined reaction fronts characteristic of cooperative
43
44 growth. A continuous process could also be inferred from the presence of discrete precipitates.
45
46 However, although some austenite grains evidenced only volume precipitation, the
47
48 predominance of the lamellar morphology confirmed higher transformation efficiency for the
49
50 DP reaction. Figure 2 exhibits a typical microstructure, where both DP and CP regions can be
51
52 observed. The arrow indicates precipitation at a grain boundary. The grain labelled as A
53
54 decomposed continuously, exhibiting precipitates with lenticular or faceted morphologies.
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4 Globular/rod-like precipitates can be observed in grain B, which also presents discontinuous
5
6
7 fronts.

8
9 Figure 3 presents bright-field TEM images showing the onset of DP at early ageing
10 stages. In figure 3 (a) the nitride lamellae are developing at an angle with respect to the GB,
11 which caused the boundary to be locally deflected and resulted in a morphology closely
12 resembling the configuration proposed by Tu and Turnbull [4,5] (see figure 1 (a)). GB
13 migration at a definite angle with the habit planes is also clearly evident in figure 3 (b). The
14 interlamellar spacing at early precipitation stages is around 100 nm.
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22

23 Figure 4 shows a colony with alternating lamellae of Cr_2N and solute depleted
24 austenite growing from the supersaturated austenite after ageing for 2h at 960°C . In spite of the
25 apparent intragranular condition, a homogeneous nucleation should not be inferred as the
26 aggregate is probably a cross-section of a larger colony nucleated heterogeneously at a GB
27 somewhere else. Although the nucleation behaviour of the colony cannot be discussed, its
28 crystallographic features allow a deeper understanding of the $\gamma/\text{Cr}_2\text{N}$ cooperative growth. The
29 selected area diffraction (SAD) pattern presented in figure 4 shows that the OR between the
30 two lamellar phases is close to the relation described in the literature [10,17]:
31 $(111)_\gamma // (0001)_{\text{Cr}_2\text{N}}$ and $[\bar{1}\bar{1}0]_\gamma // [\bar{1}\bar{1}00]_{\text{Cr}_2\text{N}}$. However, there is a slight misorientation (15
32 mrad) as the solid lines in the diffraction pattern indicate. The reaction fronts are roughly
33 perpendicular to the compact $(111)_\gamma$ and $(0001)_{\text{Cr}_2\text{N}}$ planes, however, local changes in growth
34 direction affected the $\text{Cr}_2\text{N}/\gamma$ lamellar interfaces which do not correspond to specific habit
35 planes. The orientation tolerance, together with the lamellae irregular and curved interfaces,
36 indicates that the transformation is unable to take full advantage of potentially low interfacial
37 energy configurations during the growth process. Consequently, minimization of the system
38 interfacial energy is not critical for the lamellar configuration adopted during growth, which
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4 may result from an initially favoured nucleation of Cr_2N on $(111)_\gamma$ planes and from kinetic
5
6 reasons related to comparable growth rates of the compact planes for both phases.
7
8

9 A similar precipitation behaviour has been described for the Ni-Sn system [18].
10

11 The lattice parameter (a) determined for austenite after 2 h at 960 °C by XRD is
12 0.36164 nm [11]. The following experimental relation for this austenite $a = 0.00272 \text{ wt.\% N} +$
13 0.36002 nm [19], enables to estimate a nitrogen content of 0.6 wt.%. This shows that after two
14
15 hours of ageing treatment there is still a high nitrogen supersaturation in the austenitic matrix,
16
17 in agreement with the growth pattern expected for interstitial/substitutional systems.
18
19
20
21
22

23 Twin domains inside austenite lamellae were frequently observed in well developed
24 DP colonies. Twinning was associated with abrupt modifications in the growth direction of the
25 Cr_2N lamellae, as illustrated in figure 5 (arrows). The ledges and the twin front morphology in
26
27 the magnified inset of figure 5 indicate that the original crystallographic orientation of the
28
29 lamella outgrew the mirrored one after another growth inflection. These results show that the
30
31 shape changes associated to the presence of twin domains are able to accommodate shear
32
33 strain during the solid state transformation. Stacking fault termination/initiation under similar
34
35 circumstances has been observed in discontinuous precipitation of Ni_3Sn [18]. The irregular
36
37 morphology of the nitride lamellae in figure 5 indicates again that minimization of the total
38
39 interfacial energy of the system is not a key factor for the lamellar configuration adopted
40
41 during growth.
42
43
44
45
46
47
48

49 Figure 6 (a) shows typical isolated intragranular Cr_2N precipitates, exhibiting lenticular
50 and faceted morphologies and displaying complex interfacial contrast. The lenticular
51
52 precipitate presents a low-index OR with the matrix. Contrarily to the 0001 spot in the $[\bar{1}\bar{1}00]$
53
54 microdiffraction pattern, the 0001 spot in the $[1\bar{1}\bar{2}0]$ microdiffraction pattern cannot be
55
56 generated by dynamical scattering effects and confirms a trigonal structure as opposed to a
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4 hcp-based one [20]. The strong dislocation contrast observed around these precipitates points
5
6
7 to partial coherence between the phases, at least at early precipitation stages.
8

9
10 Figure 6 (b) shows a region where globular/rod-like precipitates have been observed.
11
12 The fringe contrast surrounding the particles results from a combined effect of thickness changes
13
14 related to the shape of the precipitates and extinction at the inclined interfaces. Diffraction
15
16 experiments enabled to identify these precipitates as Cr_2N . No preferred OR with the matrix
17
18 could be found and dislocation contrast was not observed around these globular precipitates.
19
20 Similar globular/rod-like Cr_2N precipitates have been previously reported in high nitrogen Cr-
21
22 Mn austenitic steel [21].
23
24

25
26 A close inspection at figure 2 reveals that precipitate morphologies analogous to the
27
28 ones displayed in figure 6 (a) can be found in region A, whereas the ones of figure 6 (b)
29
30 correspond to a region similar to B. The precipitation mechanism of lenticular and faceted
31
32 precipitates is clearly continuous; however globular/rod-like Cr_2N may result from an irregular
33
34 cooperative process occurring at terminal ageing stages.
35
36

37
38 Figure 7 shows ferrite plates growing in a region where nitrides have precipitated
39
40 continuously. Ferrite growth involves heavy nitrogen segregation that contributes to the
41
42 formation of nitride precipitates at the δ/γ interfaces. These precipitates were able to grow
43
44 across ferrite plates and into the matrix. The orientation relation between ferrite and austenite
45
46 is of the Kurdjumov-Sachs type. EDS analyses and diffraction experiments carried out with
47
48 these precipitates enabled to identify the Cr_2N phase. The ferrite volume fraction determined
49
50 by magnetoscope measurements in the material aged at 960°C for 2 h is $\sim 5\%$.
51
52
53
54
55
56

57 ***2.2 Cr_2N precipitation at incoherent twin fronts***

58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Figure 8 shows an isolated twin plate growing in austenite. Chromium-rich precipitates lie along the twin front (see EDS spectrum). As it would be unlikely for the twin front to meet on its way a row of aligned precipitates, one can assume these have precipitated at the interface. This means that either precipitation has blocked the twin plate growth or this is an example of grain boundary migration and the two phases would subsequently grow cooperatively forming a discontinuous precipitation aggregate. This type of behaviour has been reported for $M_{23}C_6$ [22]. However, to the authors' best knowledge, it has not been described for chromium nitride precipitation. A SAD pattern of the set is shown in figure 8 (c). This diffraction pattern is similar to the one presented in figure 5, where the phases present the same orientation relation: $(111)\gamma// (111)\gamma_T// (0001)Cr_2N$ and $[\bar{1}\bar{1}0]\gamma// [\bar{1}\bar{1}0]\gamma_T// [\bar{1}\bar{1}00]Cr_2N$. The extra satellites and streaking observed in figure 8 (c) result, respectively, from double diffraction effects and from the precipitate alignment along the twin front. A microdiffraction pattern of a precipitate under the same orientation is shown in (d).

The set was studied under another crystallographic orientation, where a complex diffraction configuration was observed as shown in figure 9 (a). Careful diffraction experiments and pattern simulation for the 3 crystals (which were associated considering the above OR and jointly rotated) enabled to interpret this diffraction pattern as follows: (i) the main reflections match the diffraction pattern of the matrix, as shown in figure 9 (b)); (ii) there is a perfect overlap between reflections corresponding to the mirror related austenite domains, as can be inferred by comparing figures 9 (b) and (c)); (iii) the magnified inset in figure 9 (a) shows spots around the austenite reflections originating from Cr_2N , that under this orientation exhibits a pattern configuration similar to the twin domain one, as can be seen in figure 9 (d)); (iv) Cr_2N reflections are multiplied by double diffraction effects.

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Figure 10 shows another twin plate growing into the austenite matrix and displaying nitride precipitation at its front. In this case, cooperative growth between the two phases is evident. Contrarily to the similar cooperative growth observed at twin fronts for $M_{23}C_6$ [22], Cr_2N lamellae do not present well-defined habit planes. In view of the irregular morphologies and curved habit surfaces of the precipitates in Figs. 8 and 10, a mechanism of the Fournelle and Clark type is likely to be operative: the Cr_2N precipitates appear in an already migrating boundary, growing thereafter cooperatively with the solute depleted twin domain with no preferential matrix/precipitate habit plane.

The interlamellar spacing at twin fronts was similar to the one observed at the early precipitation stages of DP initiated at grain boundaries, i.e., ~ 100 nm (compare figures 3 and 10). However, cooperative growth at twin fronts was incipient when compared with DP from grain boundaries and the question arises as to why growth at twin front conditions is less efficient.

Although the twin front is not fully coherent (dislocations are generally associated with this type of glissile interface), it can be expected to exhibit less distortion in the individual atomic positions when compared with an incoherent grain boundary. This causes increased activation energy for substitutional diffusion and therefore decreased diffusion permeability [23,24]. As a result, the incipient growth of $CrN + \gamma_T$ aggregates may be justified by lower Cr diffusivity conditions at the twin front as compared with grain boundaries. It is worth mentioning that, contrarily to DP from grain boundaries, the precipitates protrude significantly at the reaction front (compare figures 8 and 10 with figure 3), indicating that the interface between the parent and twinned austenite, γ/γ_T , has lower mobility than the Cr_2N/γ interface. Alternatively, strain-fields at the twin front may also contribute to hinder growth: the high

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

coherency of the whole configuration is expected to limit the strain that a twin front can accommodate both in directions perpendicular and parallel to the coherent mirror planes.

2.3 Grain boundary precipitation

Discrete Cr₂N precipitates were frequently observed at grain boundaries. Figure 11 shows precipitates displaying the usual preferred OR with the matrix; some of these precipitates grew from the grain boundary into the upper region (see A). The crystallographic orientation of austenite is the same at both sides of the GB original position, in agreement with a GB migration process: the bottom grain swept the above region, growing cooperatively with *some* of the Cr₂N particles precipitated at the GB. This type of configuration is frequent at the initiation sites of DP colonies. The curved morphology of the precipitate lamellae reflects the low influence of interfacial energy on the cooperative growth process.

Figure 12 shows another example of precipitation at a GB. In this case, there is an approximately continuous film of nitride at the GB and the austenite phase has a different crystallographic orientation on each side. The diffraction pattern corresponds to a mirror orientation relation, indicating that the Cr₂N film separates twinned regions and that precipitation occurred at the mirror plane. The orientation relation between the phases is $(111)_{\gamma} // (111)_{\gamma_T} // (0001)_{\text{Cr}_2\text{N}}$ and $[\bar{1}\bar{1}0]_{\gamma} // [\bar{1}\bar{1}0]_{\gamma_T} // [\bar{1}\bar{1}00]_{\text{Cr}_2\text{N}}$ (compare the diffraction patterns in figure 12 and figure 9 (a)). Interfacial considerations seem to justify the fact that under this crystallographic configuration the precipitates were able to grow into a film.

5. Conclusions

Precipitate morphologies at the onset of Cr₂N discontinuous precipitation from grain boundaries point to a Tu and Turnbull initiation mechanism. The OR between γ and Cr₂N lamellae in DP colonies is not strictly: $(111)_\gamma // (0001)_{\text{Cr}_2\text{N}}$ and $[\bar{1}\bar{1}0]_\gamma // [\bar{1}\bar{1}00]_{\text{Cr}_2\text{N}}$. Furthermore, local changes in growth direction affect the lamellar interfaces which do not correspond to specific habit planes. This indicates that the transformation is unable to take full advantage of potentially lower interfacial energy configurations during the growth process. Consequently, minimization of the system interfacial energy during growth is not crucial for the lamellar configuration adopted, which seems to result from an initially favoured nucleation of Cr₂N on $(111)_\gamma$ planes together with comparable growth rates along the compact planes for both phases. Twinning inside austenite lamellae in well developed DP colonies was related to growth inflections and indicates that the shape changes associated with the twin domains are able to accommodate shear strain developed during the solid state transformation.

Precipitate morphologies at the onset of Cr₂N discontinuous precipitation from twin fronts point to a Fournelle and Clark initiation mechanism. Cr₂N precipitates at twin fronts presented a $(111)_\gamma // (111)_{\gamma_T} // (0001)_{\text{Cr}_2\text{N}}$ and $[\bar{1}\bar{1}0]_\gamma // [\bar{1}\bar{1}0]_{\gamma_T} // [\bar{1}\bar{1}00]_{\text{Cr}_2\text{N}}$ orientation relation with the mirror related austenite domains. Cooperative growth at twin fronts was incipient when compared with the one observed for DP colonies. The sluggish growth of CrN + γ_T aggregates can be justified by lower Cr diffusivity conditions at the twin front. Strain-fields at the twin front may also contribute to hinder growth in this discontinuous precipitation mechanism.

Austenite grains with no signs of discontinuous reaction fronts exhibited continuously precipitated Cr₂N. Discrete precipitation was also observed in association with ferrite plate formation and at grain boundaries. Nevertheless, a higher efficiency for DP from grain

1
2
3
4 boundaries was evident. The present results indicate that interfacial considerations do not play
5
6 a critical role in the higher precipitation efficiency of this mechanism.
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14

15 16 **6. References**

- 17
18
19
20
21 [1] M. Hillert, Metall Trans **3** 2729 (1972)
22
23 [2] M. Hillert, Acta Metall **30** 1689 (1982)
24
25 [3] D. Duly, J. P. Simon, Y. Brechet, acta Metall Mater **43** 101 (1995)
26
27 [4] K.N. Tu and D. Turnbull, Acta Metall. **369** 1317 (1967).
28
29 [5] K.N. Tu, Metall. Trans. **3** 2769 (1972).
30
31 [6] R.A. Fournelle and J. B. Clark, Metall. Trans. **3** 2757 (1972).
32
33 [7] W. Gust, Phase transformations (The Institution of metallurgists, London, 1979), Vol 1,
34
35 pp.II 27-68.
36
37 [8] D.B. Williams and Butler, Int. Mater. Rev. **26** 153 (1981).
38
39 [9] D.Y. Yoon, Int. Mater. Rev. **40** 149 (1995).
40
41 [10] M. Kikuchi, M. Kajihara and S.K. Choi, Mater. Sci. Eng. **A146** 131 (1991).
42
43 [11] I.F. Machado and A.F. Padilha, Steel Res. **67** 285 (1996).
44
45 [12] W.E. Voice and R.G. Faulkner, J. Mater. Sci. **22** 4221 (1987).
46
47 [13] P. Pant, P. Dahlmann, W. Schlump and G. Stein, Steel Res. **58** 18 (1987).
48
49 [14] R.G. Faulkner, Mater. Sci. Tech. **9** 118 (1993).
50
51 [15] F. Vanderschaeve, R. Taillard and J. Foct, J. Mater. Sci. **30** 6035 (1995).
52
53 [16] N.C. Santhi Srinivas and V.V. Katumbarao, Scripta Mater. **37** 285 (1997).
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

- 1
2
3
4
5
6 [17] A.J. Ramirez, J.C. Lippold and S.D. Brandi, *Met. Mater. Trans.* **A34** 1575 (2003).
7
8 [18] P.A. Carvalho, M. Sijbolts, B.J. Kooi and J.Th.M De Hosson., *Acta Mater.* 48 4203
9
10 (2000).
11
12 [19] I.F. Machado, PhD thesis: Escola Politécnica da Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil,
13
14 (1996).
15
16 [20] T.H. Lee, C.S. Oh, H.N. Han, C.G. Lee, S.J. Kim and S. Takaki, *Acta Cryst.* **B61** 137
17
18 (2005).
19
20
21 [21] E. Ruedl and G. Valdré, *J. Mater. Sci.* **23** 3698 (1988).
22
23
24 [22] T. Sourmail and H.K.D.H. Bhadeshia, *Metall. Mater. Trans.* **A36** 23 (2005).
25
26
27 [23] A.P. Sutton and R.W. Balluffi, *Interfaces in Crystalline Materials*, Elsevier Science,
28
29 Oxford, 1995.
30
31 [24] I. Kaur, Y. Mishin, and W. Gust, *Fundamentals of Grain and Interphase Boundary*
32
33 *Diffusion*, John Wiley, Chichester, 1995.
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4 Figure 1 – Successive stages in DP initiation according to the (a) Tu and Turnbull
5 [1,2] and (b) Fournelle and Clark [3] mechanisms.
6
7
8

9
10 Figure 2 – Typical microstructure of the material aged at 960°C for 2 hours evidencing
11 both DP and CP. Grain A exhibits lenticular and faceted precipitates resulting from a
12 continuous process. Globular precipitates can be observed in region B. The arrow
13 points to precipitates at a grain boundary.
14
15
16
17
18

19
20 Figure 3 – Onset of chromium nitride discontinuous precipitation at grain boundaries
21 at an early ageing stage (90 s at 900°C).
22
23
24
25
26

27 Figure 4 – (a) DP colony in an austenite grain (aged at 960°C for 2 h). (b) Diffraction
28 pattern of the colony exhibiting 15 mrad of misorientation between the lamellar
29 phases.
30
31
32
33
34

35
36 Figure 5 – Twin domains (γ_T) within austenite (γ) lamellae in a well developed DP
37 colony (aged at 960°C for 2 h). Reciprocal lattice cells of the twin variants are
38 indicated in the diffraction pattern. The mirror plane presents steps of tens of
39 nanometres (magnified inset).
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48

49 Figure 6 – (a) Lenticular and faceted Cr_2N precipitates in austenite (aged at 960°C for
50 2 h) and respective SAD and microdiffraction patterns (the lenticular precipitate
51 presents a low-index OR with the matrix). (b) Globular/rod-like Cr_2N precipitates and
52 microdiffraction pattern obtained from one precipitate (aged at 960°C for 2 h).
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3 Figure 7 – Cr₂N growing across ferrite plates (a) and (b) together with microdiffraction
4 patterns and EDS spectrum obtained at the numbered regions: (1) and (2) correspond
5 to δ-ferrite, (3) and (4) to Cr₂N (aged at 960°C for 2 h).
6
7
8
9

10
11
12 Figure 8 – (a) A twin plate in austenite aged at 960°C for 2 h. (b) Magnified detail
13 showing Cr nitride at the twin front. (c) SAD of the whole set corresponding to the
14 (111)_γ//(111)_{γ_T}//(0001)Cr₂N and $[1\bar{1}0]_{\gamma}//[1\bar{1}0]_{\gamma_T}//[1\bar{1}00]_{Cr_2N}$ orientation relation (the
15 diffraction pattern is rotated in relation to the image, the slight streaking is parallel to
16 the twin front trace in (a) and (b)). (d) Microdiffraction pattern of the lower precipitate
17 under the same orientation as (c).
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27

28
29
30 Figure 9 - (a) SAD corresponding to the whole twin front set shown in figure 8 under
31 another crystallographic orientation. (b) SAD pattern obtained at the surrounding
32 matrix under the same orientation as (a). The circled spots in (b) match exactly the
33 ones of the twin domain pattern presented in (c). (d) Microdiffraction pattern of the
34 lower precipitate under the same orientation as (a). The orientation relation between
35 the phases is (111)_γ//(111)_{γ_T}//(0001)Cr₂N and $[1\bar{1}0]_{\gamma}//[1\bar{1}0]_{\gamma_T}//[1\bar{1}00]_{Cr_2N}$.
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46

47 Figure 10 – Twin front exhibiting cooperative growth with Cr₂N precipitates (aged at
48 960°C for 2 h).
49
50
51

52
53
54 Figure 11 – Grain boundary precipitation (aged at 960°C for 2 h). The SAD pattern
55 matches Cr₂N, which exhibits the usual preferred OR with austenite. Both γ regions
56 have the same crystallographic orientation indicating that the observed lamellar Cr₂N
57 precipitation is the result of a GB migration process.
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Figure 12 – (a) Continuous nitride film precipitated at a twin boundary (aged at 960°C for 2 h) under tilt condition 1, where the contrast difference between the adjacent austenite grains demonstrates different crystallographic orientations. (b) Magnified detail of the selected region in (a) under tilt condition 2, where the two austenite regions display similar contrast. (c) SAD pattern of the set under tilt condition 2 (for interpretation refer to figure 9).

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

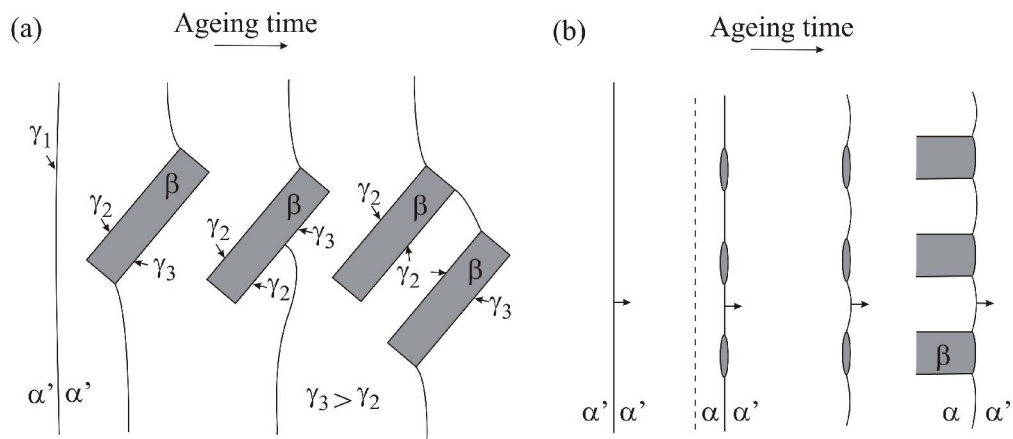


Figure 1
292x131mm (300 x 300 DPI)

Pre-Review Only

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

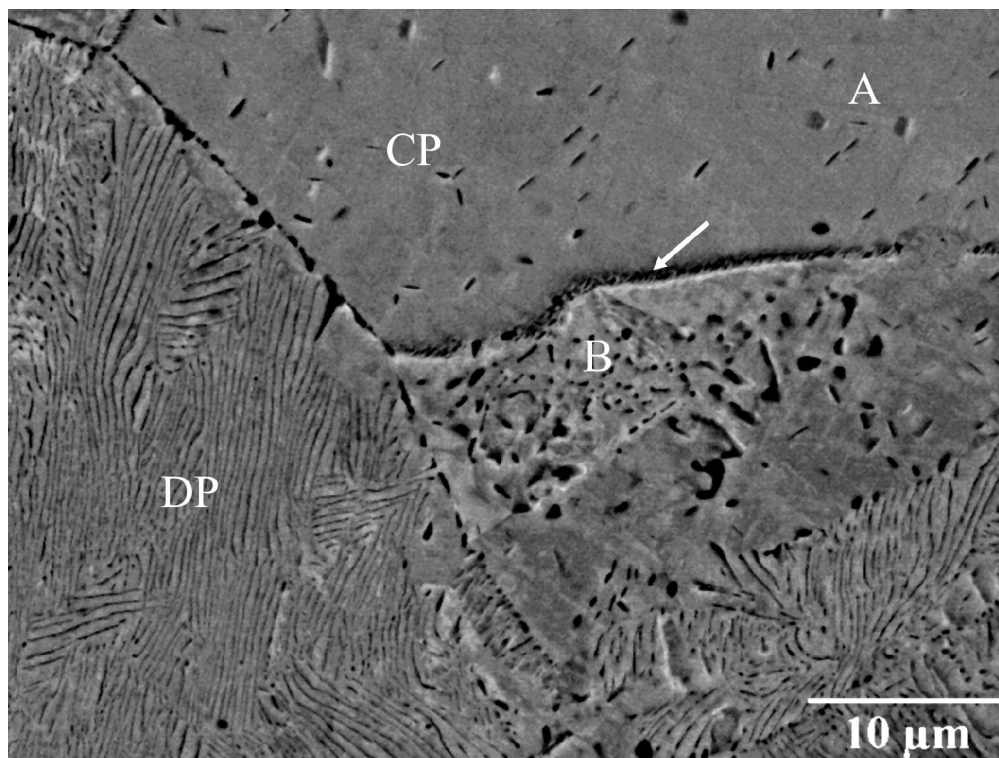


Figure 2
137x102mm (300 x 300 DPI)

new Only

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

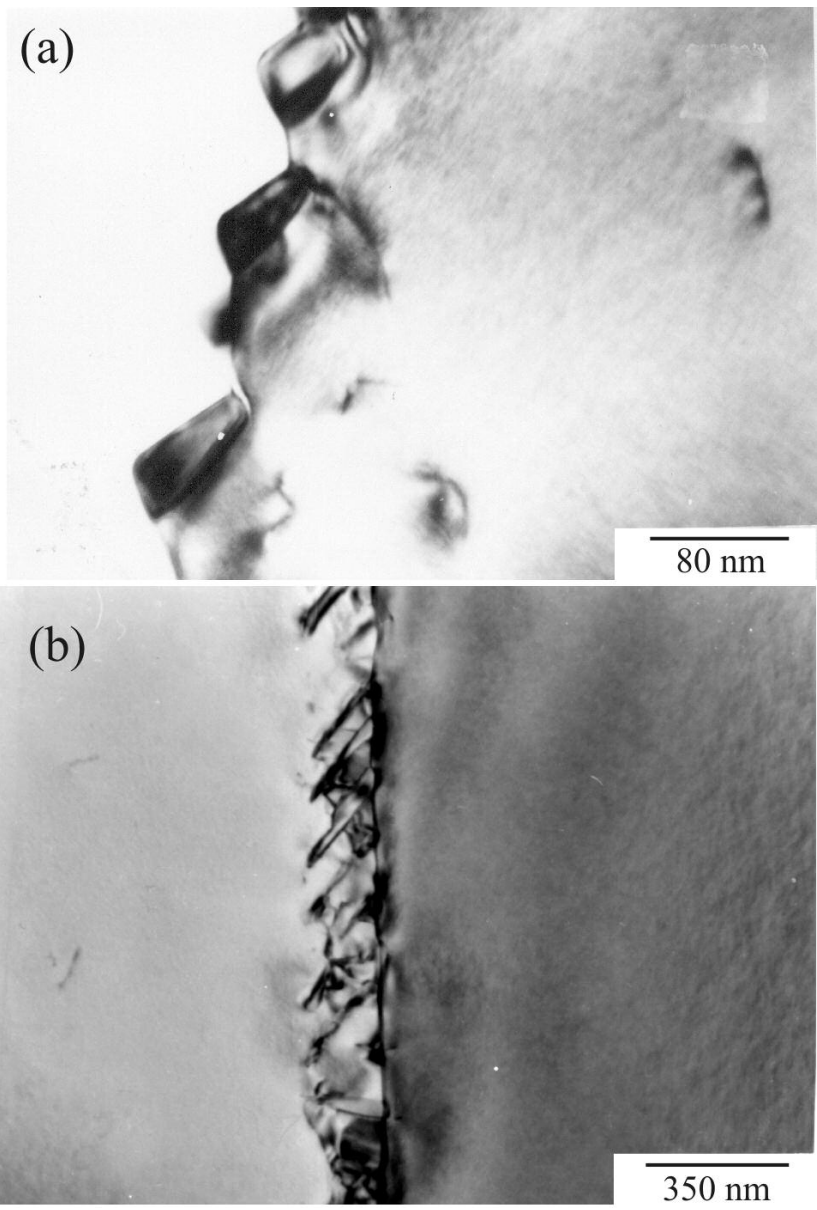


Figure 3
80x118mm (300 x 300 DPI)

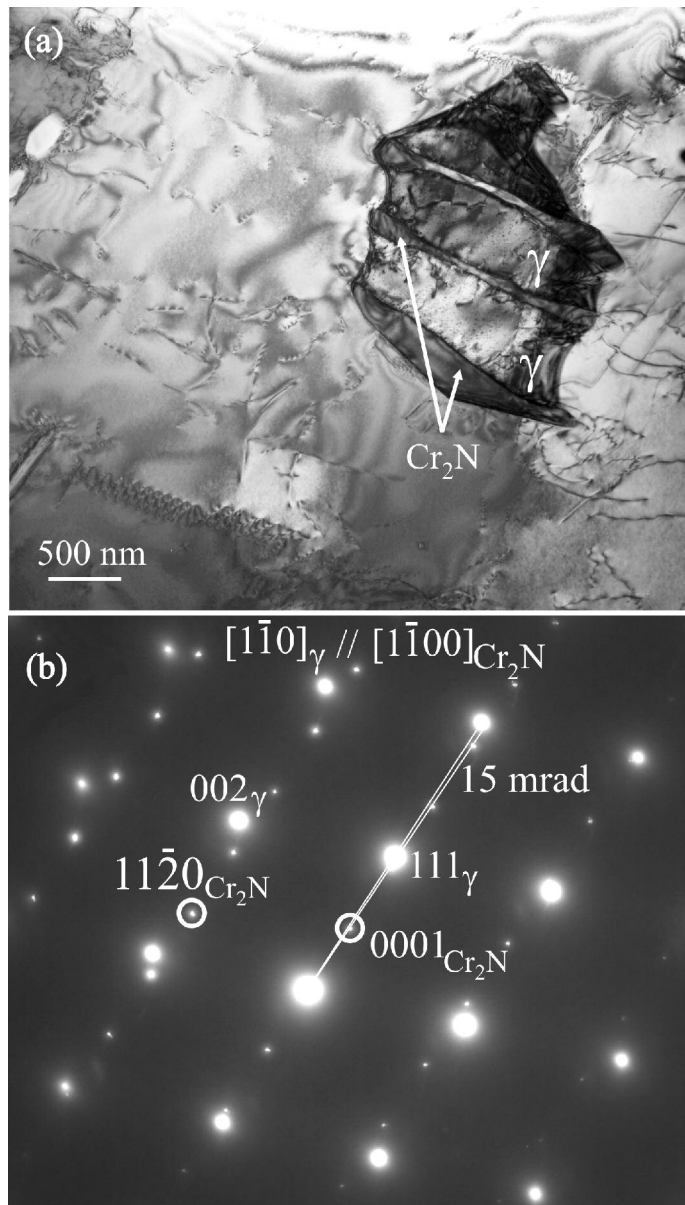


Figure 4
120x210mm (300 x 300 DPI)

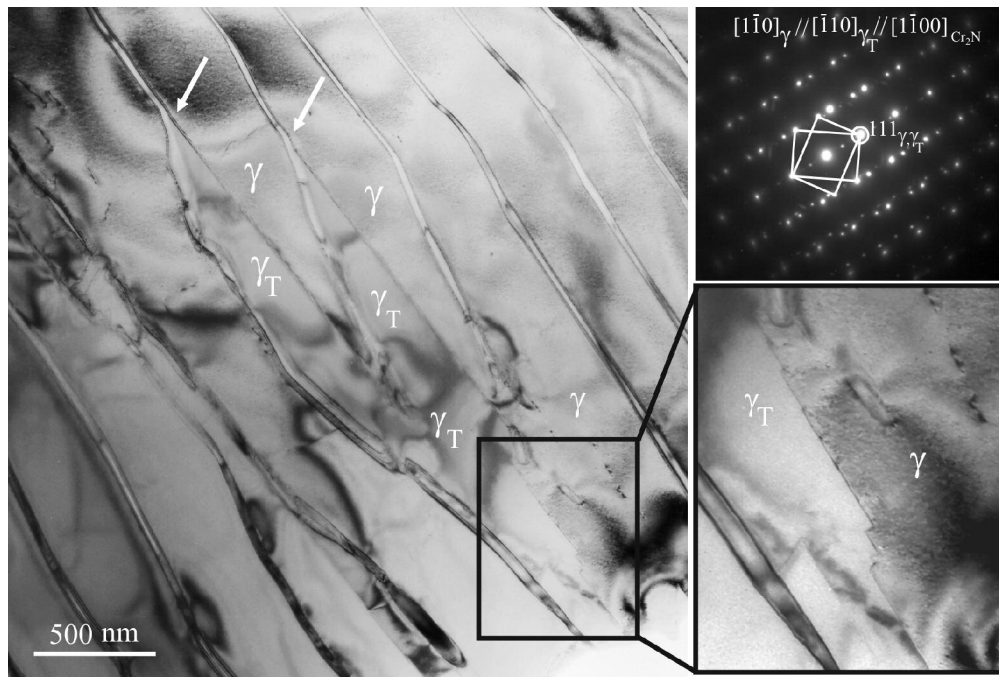


Figure 5
144x97mm (300 x 300 DPI)

view Only

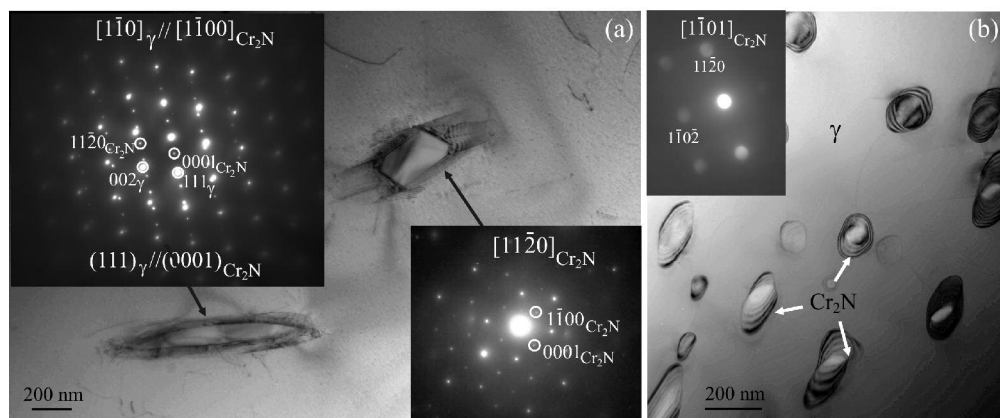


Figure 6
214x89mm (300 x 300 DPI)

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

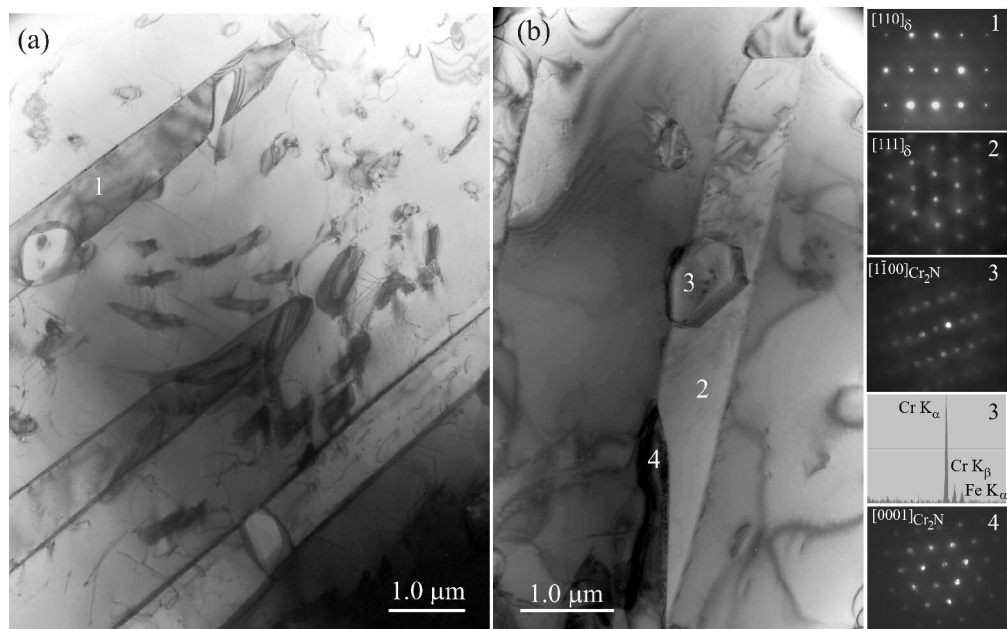


Figure 7
271x170mm (300 x 300 DPI)

Review Only

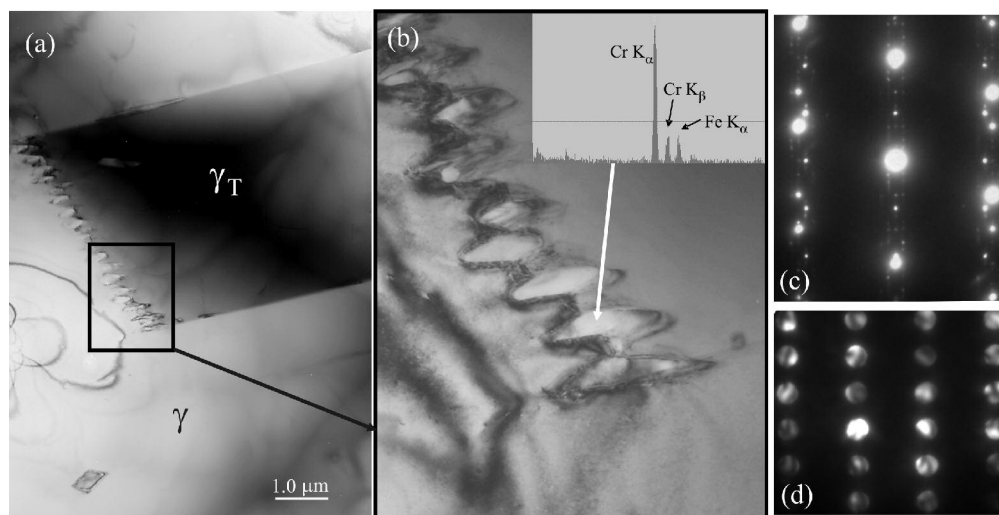


Figure 8
189x97mm (300 x 300 DPI)

Review Only

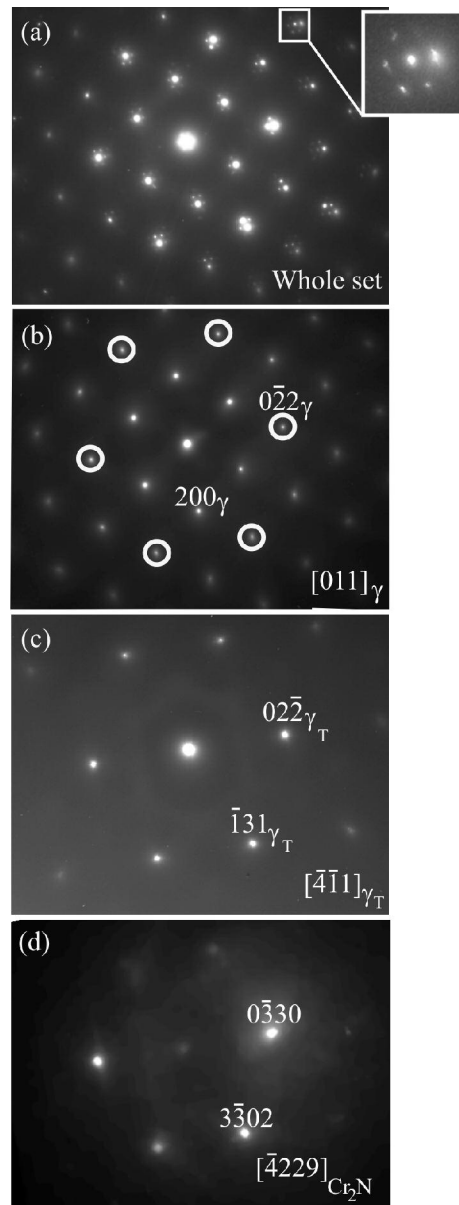


Figure 9
70x184mm (300 x 300 DPI)

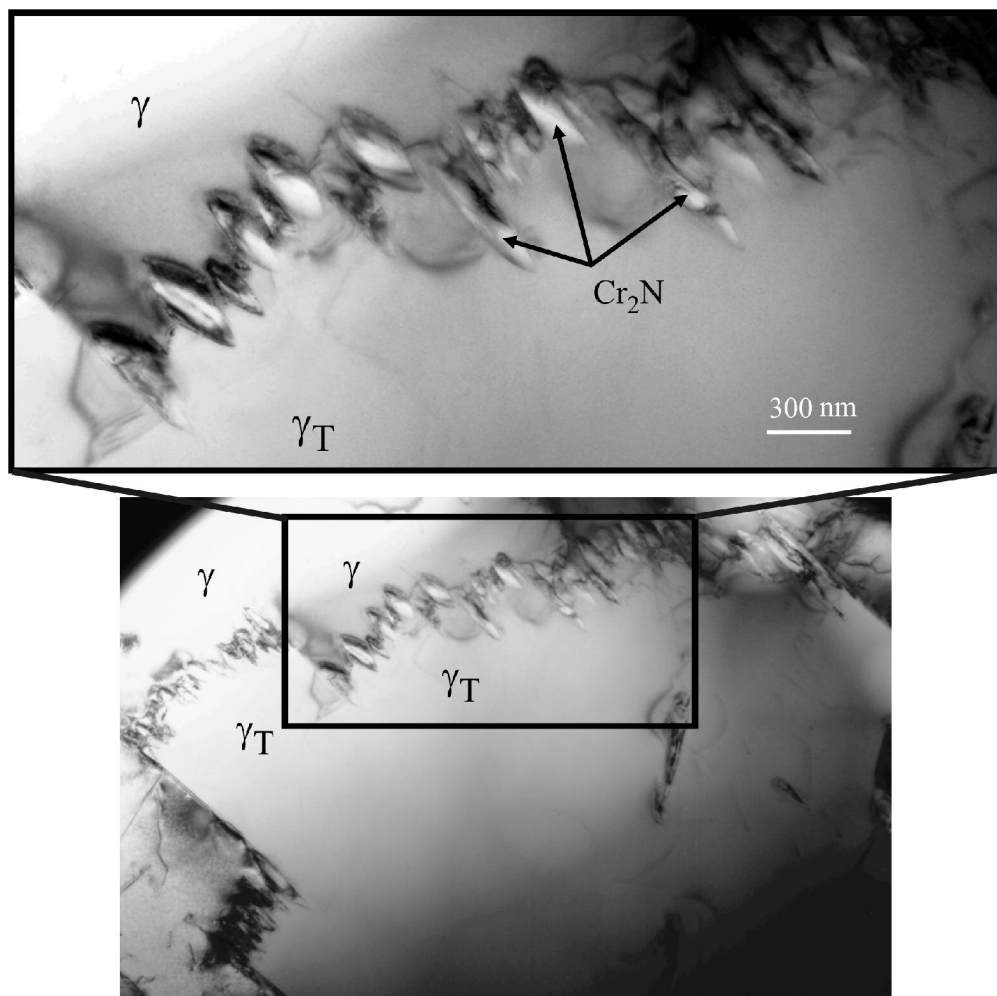


Figure 10
167x166mm (300 x 300 DPI)

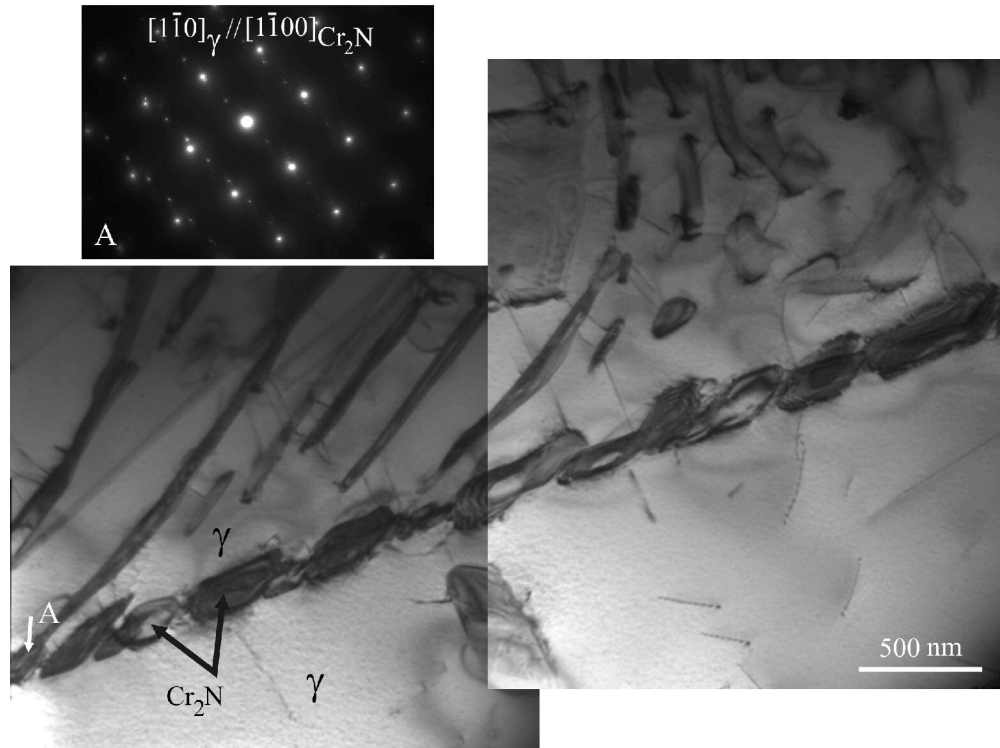


Figure 11
178x140mm (300 x 300 DPI)

View Only

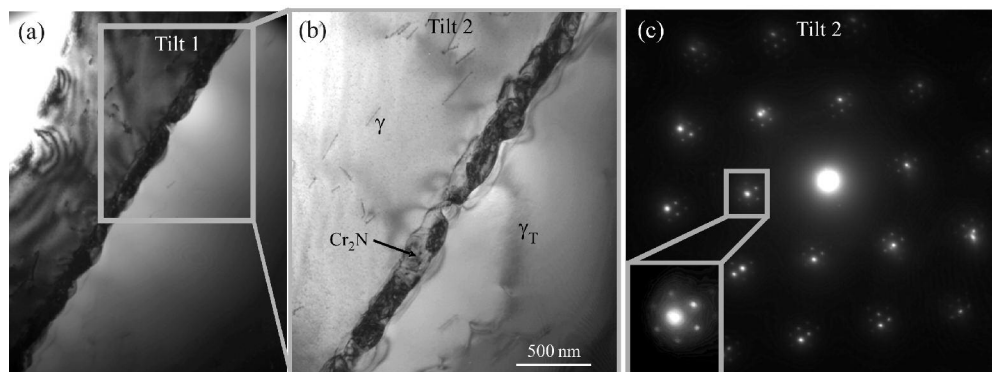


Figure 12
230x86mm (300 x 300 DPI)

Peer Review Only