

# TAMMiCol User Guide

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## 29 **1 Introduction**

30 Tool for Analysis of the Morphology of Microbial Colonies (TAMMiCol) is an application for  
31 efficiently and automatically analysing images of microbial colonies. The software converts colony  
32 images to binary, which separates the colony from the background and any other extraneous  
33 features. The data may be analysed by exporting the binary images or by using the in-built  
34 statistics.

35 This guide provides instructions for using TAMMiCol, including preparing and managing  
36 saved images, converting these to binary, and computing statistics. The guide is divided into six  
37 broad sections: Installation, Input, Basic Processing, Advanced Settings, Output, and a Basic  
38 Example. Most users will only require Basic Processing, while Advanced Settings allows users  
39 to exert more control over the method, output, and statistics computed.

40 TAMMiCol is provided free under the GNU General Public License v3.0. Source code and  
41 binaries are available from [github.com/HaydenTronnolone/TAMMiCol](https://github.com/HaydenTronnolone/TAMMiCol). Bug reports may be  
42 submitted to [hayden.tronnolone@adelaide.edu.au](mailto:hayden.tronnolone@adelaide.edu.au).

43 A full explanation of the method used to threshold the images and produce the statistics is  
44 given by [Tronnolone, Gardner, Sundstrom, Jiranek, Oliver and Binder \(2018\)](#).

## 45 **2 Installation**

### 46 **2.1 Basic Installation**

47 TAMMiCol is written in MATLAB using the App Designer package; however, this software does  
48 not require a MATLAB license in order to operate. To install TAMMiCol, open the installation  
49 file and follow the prompts. The installation will download and install MATLAB Runtime,  
50 which contains necessary shared libraries. While an internet connection is required during the  
51 installation, TAMMiCol will run offline following installation.

52 Separate installation files are provided for systems running macOS and Windows; however,  
53 the installation process is similar for both. Users running macOS 10.12 Sierra should see the  
54 following subsection for specific steps.

### 55 **2.2 Installation on macOS 10.12 Sierra**

56 On macOS 10.12 Sierra, Gatekeeper may prevent TAMMiCol from installing correctly. Gate-  
57 keeper may be disabled through the Terminal using the command `sudo spctl --master-disable`.  
58 The installation file will also need to be placed in the installation location.

### 3 Input

While not required, it is recommended that images are saved using a consistent format that provides meaningful information about the experimental conditions. TAMMiCol is able to interpret four pieces of information in each filename: the dataset name, sample number, observation time, and image magnification. The dataset name should uniquely identify the dataset and could include information such as the strain and nutrient level. The sample number is expected to be a positive integer, but these numbers need not be sequential. The time may be given as the number of hours or number of days, but all times will be converted to hours when images or data are exported.

In order for this information to be interpreted correctly, filenames are expected to have the form:

[name] s[sample] [time]h [magnification]X.[extension],

where quantities in brackets represent the actual values. For example, a tif image of unspecified magnification from sample 5 that is part of the dataset named AWRI 796 observed after 233 hours would have the filename

AWRI 796 s5 233h.tif.

If the observation time is measured in days, this should have the form d[day] rather than [time]h. For example, an image taken after 3 days of growth would use d3. The images may be stored in a single directory and do not need to be sorted; however, they may be kept in subdirectories if so desired.

When saving binary images or statistics, TAMMiCol will use the information contained in the filename to sort the output. Images will be named as per the format given above, while any tables of statistics produced will also contain the name, sample number, time, and magnification. Missing values are replaced by 'NaN'. In addition, saved images will be sorted into directories based on this information. Each dataset will be allocated a new directory, named '[name] Binary', which will contain directories for each sample, named 'Sample [sample]'. All observations of a given sample are saved in the same directory.

The sample number, time, and magnification may be omitted from the filename. When this occurs, any directories and files created will have 'NaN' in place of the missing values. Importantly, TAMMiCol will still process images that are missing these items and will not report any errors. If this information is desired, the image filenames will need to be converted to the format specified above. If the information is already contained in the filename but in the wrong format, this can be readily changed on most operating systems through batch processing or through a general-purpose programming language, such as Python.

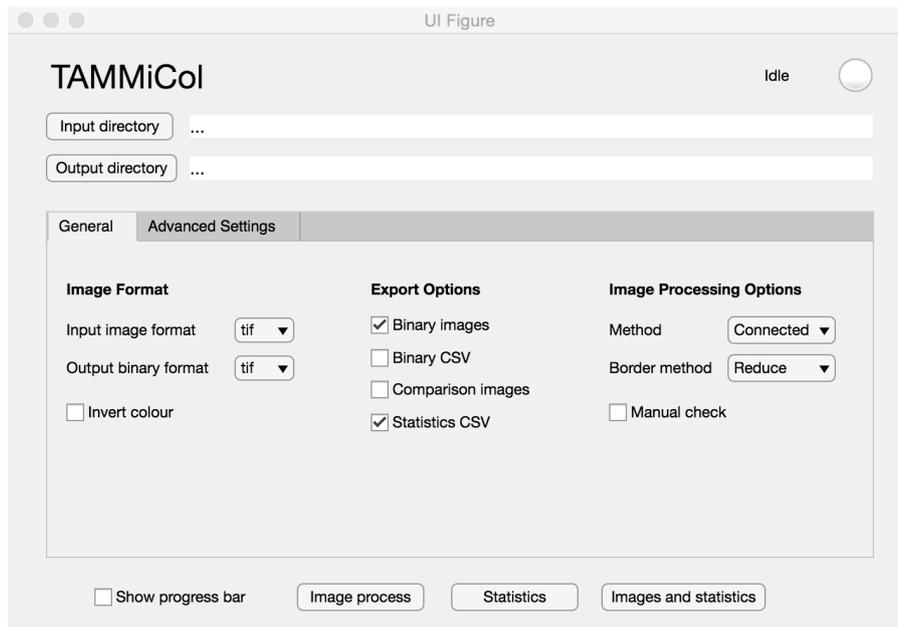


Figure 1: The general tab open in TAMMiCol.

## 93 4 Basic Processing

### 94 4.1 Overview

95 TAMMiCol opens with the general tab displayed, as shown in Figure 1. The general tab has  
 96 three sections: Image Format, Export Options and Image Processing Options. After processing,  
 97 all settings used for processing are saved as a CSV file in the same location as the saved data.

### 98 4.2 Input and Output

99 The input and output fields are viewable on all tabs. These fields control where the raw images  
 100 are located, and where output from TAMMiCol will be saved.

101 **Input** Specify the input directory, which contains the images, or subdirec-  
 102 tories of images, to be processed.

103 **Output** Specify the output location. If this is not set, it will be taken to be  
 104 the same location as the input directory.

### 105 4.3 Image Format

106 The user must specify the format of the images to be analysed. Only one format may be chosen  
 107 for each batch processing job. Any files in the input directory or subdirectories that do not

108 match the specified input format will be ignored. This means that other file types in these  
109 directories, such as files containing experimental details, need not be removed before processing.

- 110 **Image Format** Specify the format of the images to be processed.
- 111 **Output binary format** Specify the format for any binary images produced.
- 112 **Invert colour** TAMMiCol expects the colony to be darker than the background.  
113 If this is not the case, then the colour can be inverted by selecting  
114 ‘Invert colour’.

## 115 4.4 Export Options

116 There are four options under ‘Export Options’ that may each be selected independently. All of  
117 the output selected will be saved in the directory structure created by TAMMiCol.

- 118 **Binary images** Save binary images of the colonies in the selected image format.
- 119 **Binary CSV** Save CSV files of the binary image data.
- 120 **Comparison images** Produce copies of the original images with the colony pixels identified  
121 by TAMMiCol coloured green.
- 122 **Statistics CSV** Save a CSV file containing the in-built statistics, provided these are  
123 computed. The statistics are described in subsection 6.1.

## 124 4.5 Image Processing Options

125 ‘Image Processing Options’ control how images are converted to binary. The default options are  
126 best for unwashed colonies. Washed colonies comprising unconnected pieces generally require  
127 the ‘Unconnected’ method with the ‘Reduce’ border pixels method and manual checks on the  
128 threshold level.

- 129 **Method** Specify whether the colony is one connected region (‘Connected’)  
130 or multiple unconnected regions (‘Unconnected’).
- 131 **Border Method** Specify how pixels on the border of the binary image should be  
132 handled. By default, the threshold is reduced until no border  
133 pixels are selected, referred to as the ‘Reduce’ method. This may  
134 be changed to ‘Remove’, in which any connected component that  
135 includes a border pixel is removed from the binary image. This may  
136 be done if there is no chance that a piece of the colony lies near the  
137 boundary.
- 138 **Manual check** The comparison image of each colony is displayed, as illustrated in  
139 Figure 2, and the user has the option to adjust the threshold level.

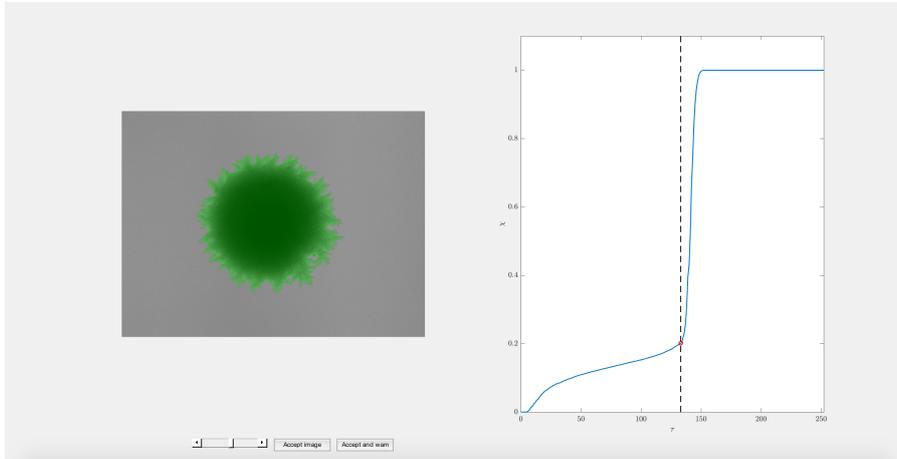


Figure 2: The manual control window.

## 140 4.6 Processing Options

141 At the bottom of the window are options for processing.

- |     |                              |  |
|-----|------------------------------|--|
| 142 | <b>Image process</b>         | Produces binary versions of the images. No statistics are produced using the processed images. The input data should be raw images.  |
| 143 |                              |  |
| 144 | <b>Statistics</b>            | Computes the statistics only. The input data should be binary images. If you wish to compute the statistics for raw images, you must select ‘Images and statistics’ instead. |
| 145 |                              |  |
| 146 |                              |  |
| 147 | <b>Images and statistics</b> | Produces binary images and computes the associated statistics. The input data should be a directory of raw images.   |
| 148 |                              |  |
| 149 | <b>Show progress bar</b>     | Shows a graphical display of the proportion of all images processed.   |

## 150 4.7 Warnings

151 TAMMiCol has a number of checks to ensure the image processing is performed as expected. If  
 152 there are errors during this process, a warning containing the image metadata and a description  
 153 of the problem is added to the log. A description of each warning is given below.

- |     |                                     |   |
|-----|-------------------------------------|---|
| 154 | <b>Critical index not<br/>found</b> | The critical tolerance at which the entire image is selected could not be identified. This value is set to be the maximum tolerance. The original image may be corrupted and the binary image should be reviewed. |
| 155 |                                     |   |
| 156 |                                     |   |
| 157 |                                     |   |

---

158	<b>Threshold index not</b>	The error in the linear fit for the proportions could not be minimised and no threshold could be identified. The tolerance is set to zero. It is likely that parts of the colony will be missed in the binary image.
159	<b>found</b>	
160		
161	<b>Reduced to maximum</b>	The selected tolerance produced an image proportion above the maximum $N$ allowed. The tolerance is reduced in order to give a binary image with the maximum permitted proportion. It is possible that the colony extended outside of the original image. The binary image should be reviewed.
162	<b>threshold <math>N</math></b>	
163		
164		
165		
166	<b>Image flagged by user</b>	The user flagged the image as problematic during the manual check. The binary image should be reviewed.
167		
168	<b>Border pixels</b>	Selected pixels were detected on the border of the image and an attempt was made to remove them. If parts of the colony were touching the boundary in the original image, these may have been removed.
169	<b>identified</b>	
170		
171		
172	<b>Removing <math>N</math> of <math>M</math></b>	Isolated pixels were detected in the image and were removed. The number $N$ of isolated pixels and the total number $M$ of pixels are given, along with the percentage of isolated pixels removed $P$ .
173	<b>isolated pixels (<math>P</math> %)</b>	
174		
175	<b>Border pixels selected</b>	Selected pixels were detected on the border of the image that were unable to be removed. This may be because the colony extends outside the original image or there is some contamination in the image that could not be removed. The binary image should be reviewed.
176		
177		
178		
179		
180	<b>Image threshold below</b>	The selected tolerance was below the selected level $N$ . The image may not have been processed correctly and the binary image should be reviewed.
181	<b><math>N</math></b>	
182		

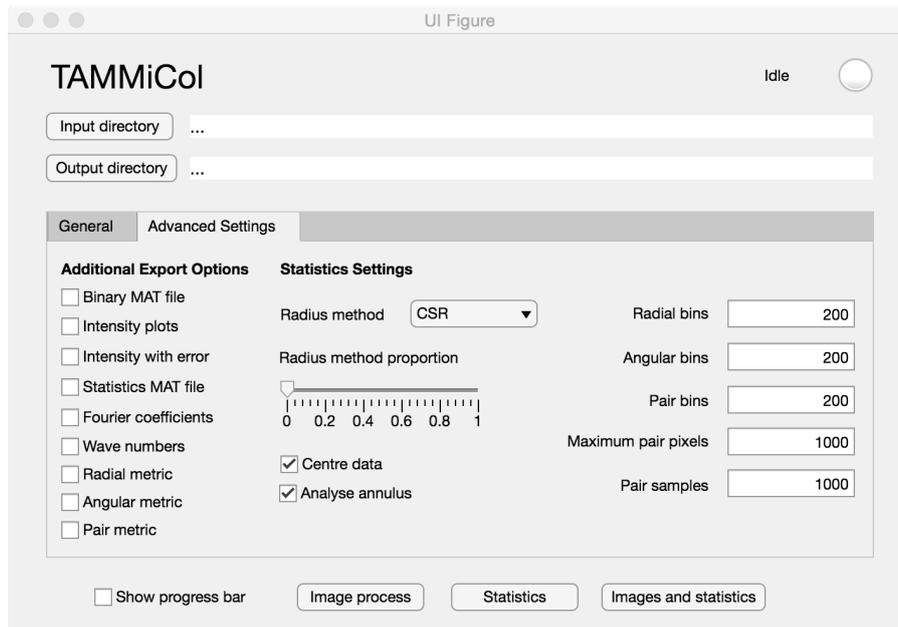


Figure 3: The advanced tab open in TAMMiCol.

## 5 Advanced Options

### 5.1 Advanced Options

The ‘Advanced Options’ tab, shown in Figure 3, contains a number of extra settings that provide additional output or adjust the methods used. These are not needed for basic image processing or for computing the default statistics.

### 5.2 Additional Export Options

These options save additional output that may be used to examine the image processing step or to export the data in a different format. A full explanation of the metrics is given by [Trommlone et al. \(2018\)](#).

<b>Binary MAT file</b>	Produces a MAT file for use in MATLAB containing the binary image data. The variables produced are described in subsection 6.6.
<b>Intensity plots</b>	Produces EPS and MATLAB fig files showing the pixel proportion and selected tolerance for each image.
<b>Intensity with error</b>	Produces EPS and MATLAB fig files of the intensity plot with the error from the linear fit added.
<b>Statistics MAT file</b>	Produces a MAT file for use in MATLAB containing the statistics. The variables produced are described in subsection 6.6.

---

200	<b>Fourier coefficients</b>	Produces a txt file containing the coefficients from the Fourier transform of the pair correlation function.
201		
202	<b>Wavenumbers</b>	Produces a txt file containing the wavenumbers ordered by the absolute value of the corresponding Fourier coefficient.
203		
204	<b>Radial metric</b>	Produces a txt file containing the radial metrics.
205	<b>Angular metric</b>	Produces a txt file containing the angular metrics.
206	<b>Pair metric</b>	Produces a txt file containing the pair metrics.

### 207 **5.3 Statistics Settings**

208 The remaining settings control the statistics computed. The different radius methods are  
209 illustrated in Figure 4.

210	<b>Radius method</b>	The data can be filtered using either the complete-spatial-randomness radius or by removing the largest connected disk.
211		
212	<b>Radius proportion</b>	Use some proportion of the selected radius method to compute the angular and pair quantities. Setting the radius proportion to zero means the entire colony is analysed, while a setting of one means the entire minimum radius is used to filter the data.
213		
214		
215		
216	<b>Centre data</b>	By default, the statistics are computed using the centroid of the selected pixels. Uncheck this option to instead use the centre of the image.
217		
218		
219	<b>Analyse annulus</b>	Use either the entire colony or the selected annulus.
220	<b>Radial bins</b>	The number of bins used to group the data for the radial count.
221	<b>Angular bins</b>	The number of bins used to group the data for the angular count.
222	<b>Pair bins</b>	The number of bins used to group the data for the pair correlation count.
223		
224	<b>Pair samples</b>	The number of samples averaged to compute the pair correlation function.
225		

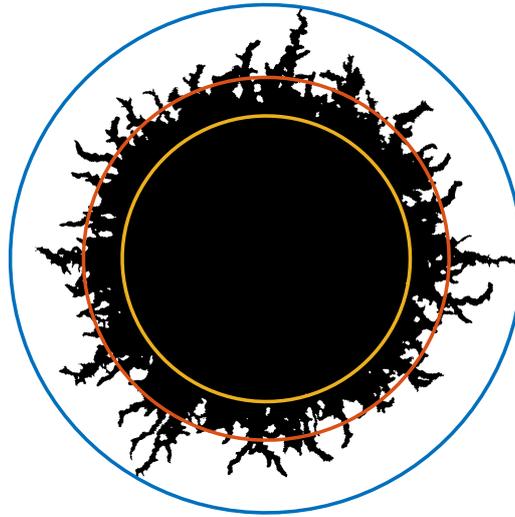


Figure 4: The radii used to analyse the data represented by circles drawn over a typical colony (black). The maximum radius  $R_{\max}$  (blue) represents the largest radius measured from the colony centre. The minimum radius  $R_{\min}$  is measured in two ways. The punch radius (yellow) represents the smallest circle with the same centre as the colony that contains only occupied cells. The CSR radius (red) represents the distance at which the chance of finding an occupied pixel is equal to the corresponding probability from a random distribution of pixels.

## 6 Output

### 6.1 Statistics

The statistics are saved in a text file called ‘[name] Statistics.txt’, which contains the statistics computed from each image, as described in the following table. These are also saved in the MATLAB data file ‘[name] Statistics.mat’, described in subsection 6.6.

### 6.2 Fourier Coefficients

The Fourier coefficients for the pair metric for each image are saved in a text file called ‘[name] Fourier Coefficients.txt’. The columns contain the dataset, sample, and time, with the  $n$ th coefficient stored in the column labelled ‘ $F_n$ ’. This variable is labelled `ffTheta` in the MATLAB data file.

### 6.3 Wavenumbers

The Wavenumbers ordered by the magnitude of the associated Fourier coefficient corresponding to the Fourier transform of the pair metric for each image are saved in a text file called ‘[name] Wavenumbers.txt’. The columns contain the dataset, sample and time, with the  $n$ th wavenumber in the column labelled ‘Wavenumber  $n$ ’. This variable is labelled `k` in the MATLAB data file.

---

Heading	Symbol	Description
Dataset	–	The name of the dataset
Sample	–	Sample number
Time	–	Observation time in hours
Magnification	–	Image magnification
Ir	$I_r$	A value between 0 and 1 that measures variation in the radial direction. Larger values indicate greater variation.
Itheta	$I_\theta$	A value between 0 and 1 that measures variation in the angular direction using the angular metric. Larger values indicate greater variation.
ITheta	$I_\Theta$	A value between 0 and 1 that measures local aggregation in the angular direction. Larger values indicate greater aggregation.
Icsr	$I_{CSR}$	A value between 0 and 1 that measures angular variation using the pair correlation metric. Larger values indicate greater variation.
Rmin	$R_{\min}$	The distance from the centre to the inner radius used to filter the data. This value is reported even if this option is not selected.
Rmax	$R_{\max}$	The radius of the colony in pixels as measured from the centre to the most distant point.
Area	$A$	The area of the colony in pixels.

---

## 241 6.4 Radial, Angular and Pair Metrics

242 The files ‘[name] Radial Metric.txt’, ‘[name] Angular Metric.txt’ and ‘[name] Pair Metric.txt’  
 243 contain the scaled bin counts from each of the metrics. The columns contain the dataset, sample  
 244 and time, with the  $n$ th bin in the column ‘Bin  $n$ ’. For radial, angular and pair metrics with  
 245 bin counts  $n_r$ ,  $n_\theta$  and  $n_\Theta$ , respectively, the corresponding bin widths are  $R_{\max}/n_r$ ,  $2\pi/n_\theta$  and  
 246  $\pi/n_\Theta$ . In MATLAB, the radial, angular and pair metrics are labelled `fr`, `ftheta` and `fTheta`,  
 247 respectively.

## 248 6.5 Settings

249 The file ‘[name] Settings.txt’ contains the input settings used in TAMMiCol to analyse the data.  
 250 This file is created automatically.

## 251 6.6 MATLAB Variables

252 All statistics variables in the MATLAB output are saved as arrays in which the first dimension  
 253 represents the time and the second the sample. For example, the value of the radial index  $I_r$   
 254 at the second observation time and fifth sample, which is stored in the variable `Ir`, would be  
 255 accessed by `Ir(2,5)`. For variables with more than one value at each observation time and

256 sample, such as the metrics, the values are stored in the third dimension. For example, the  
257 radial metric at the second observation time and fifth sample, which is stored in `fr`, would be  
258 accessed by `fr(2,5,:)`.

259 Binary image data stored in MATLAB is also saved as an array, with the  $y$ -data stored along  
260 the first dimension and the  $x$ -data along the second.

## 261 **6.7 File Names for Multiple Datasets**

262 When processing multiple datasets at the same time, the output filenames will start with  
263 ‘Multiple Datasets [timestamp]’, where [timestamp] gives the date and time of processing in the  
264 format ‘YYYYMMDDhhmm’.

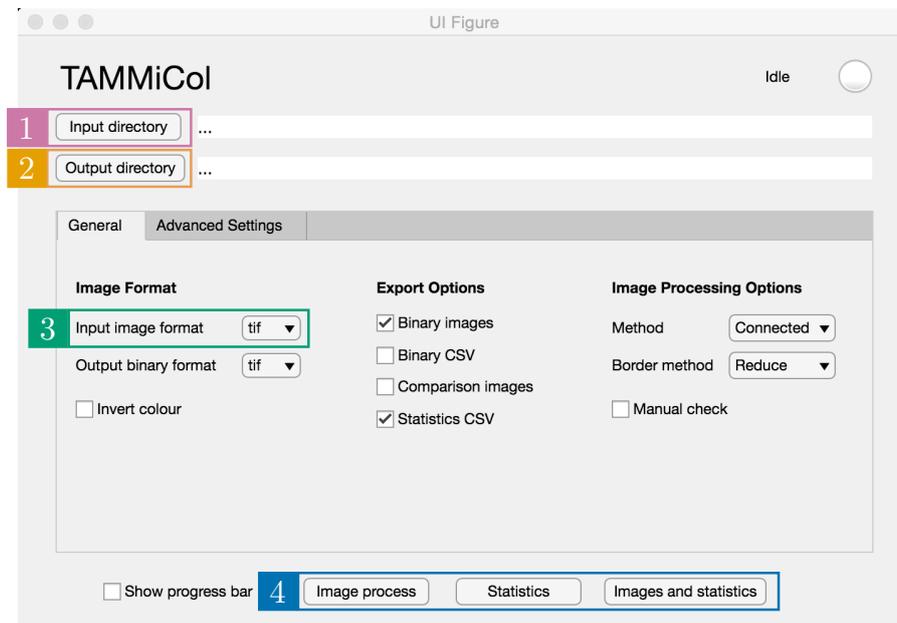


Figure 5: The basic steps for using TAMMiCol.

## 7 Basic Example

265

266 The following steps describe how to undertake a basic analysis of images using TAMMiCol.  
 267 These steps are illustrated in figure 5. The images are expected to be of connected colonies.

- 268 1. Select the directory containing the images to be processed.
- 269 2. Select the desired output location for the processed images.
- 270 3. Select the format of the input images.
- 271 4. To produce binary images only, click ‘Image process’. To produce binary images and  
 272 statistics, click ‘Images and statistics’. If the input images are already binary, statistics  
 273 may be generated directly by selecting ‘Statistics’.

## 274 8 Version History

	Number	Release Date	Description
	1.0	Unreleased	Basic functionality
275	2.0	Unreleased	Major change to GUI.
	2.1		CSV and MAT file binary export options added. Warnings now exported.

## 276 **References**

- 277 Tronnolone, H., Gardner, J. M., Sundstrom, J. F., Jiranek, V., Oliver, S. G. and Binder, B. J.  
278 (2018), TAMMiCol: Tool for analysis of the morphology of microbial colonies. In preparation.