

# Image segmentation

Robert Haase

Using materials from

Alba Villaronga Luque and Jesse Veenvliet, MPI-CBG Dresden

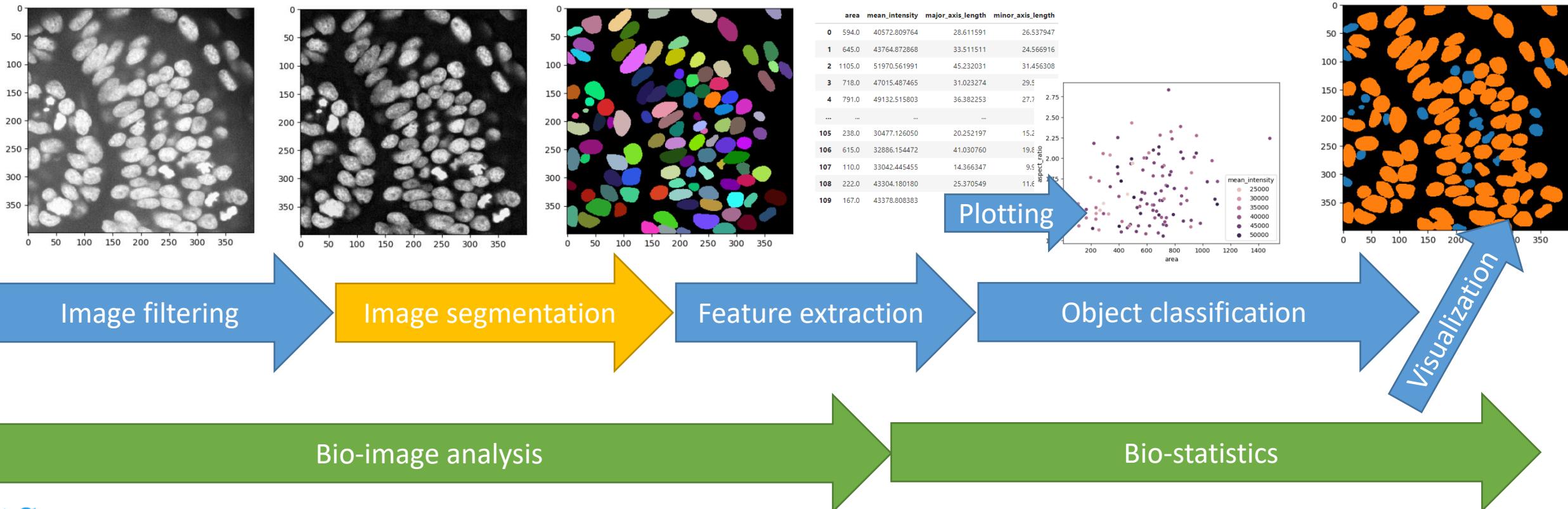
Ryan Savill George, MPI CBG Dresden

Johannes Soltwedel, PoL, TU Dresden

April 2023

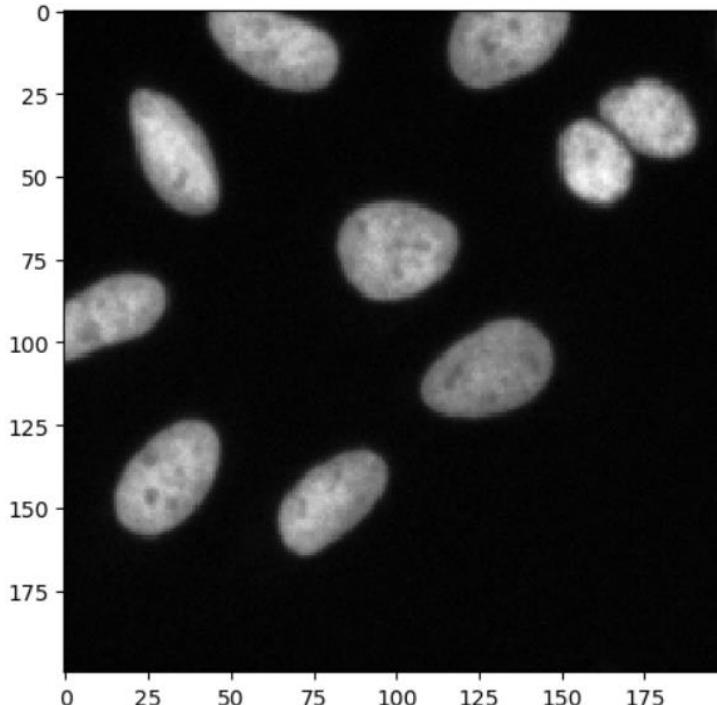
# Lecture overview: Bio-image Analysis

- Image Data Analysis workflows
- Goal: **Quantify observations, substantiate conclusions with numbers**

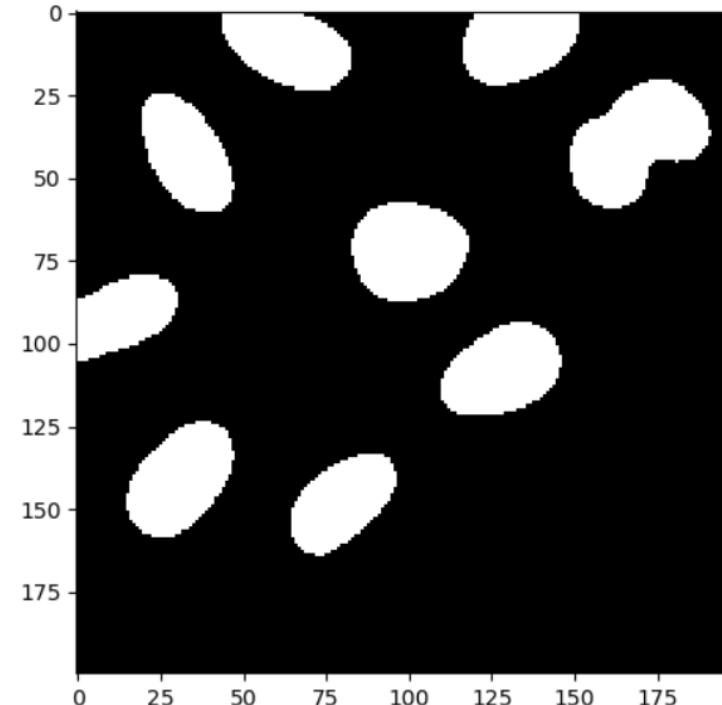


# Terminology

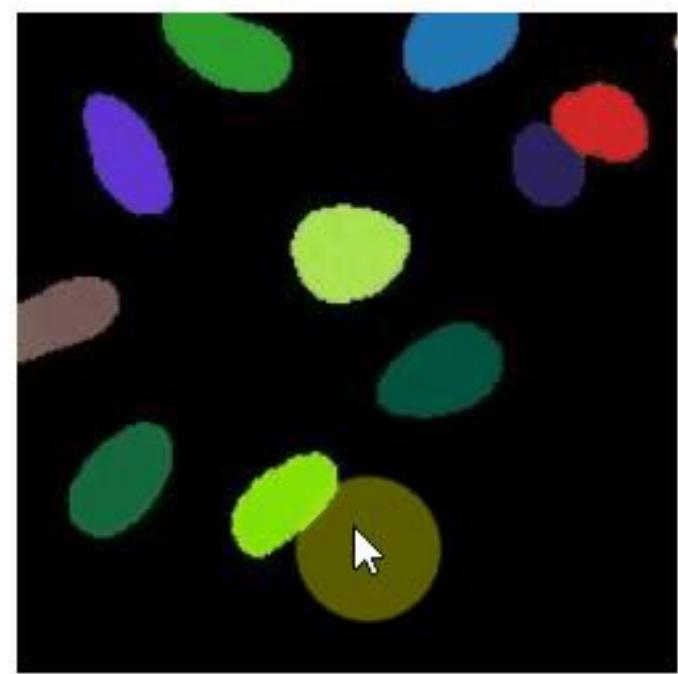
Intensity image



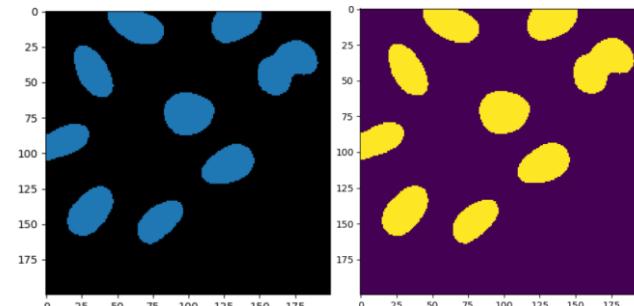
Binary image



Label image



No matter how they are displayed



[y=152, x=92] = 0

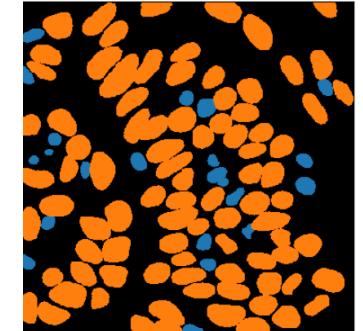
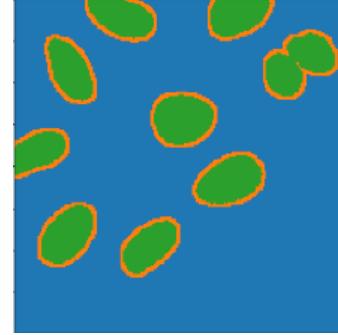
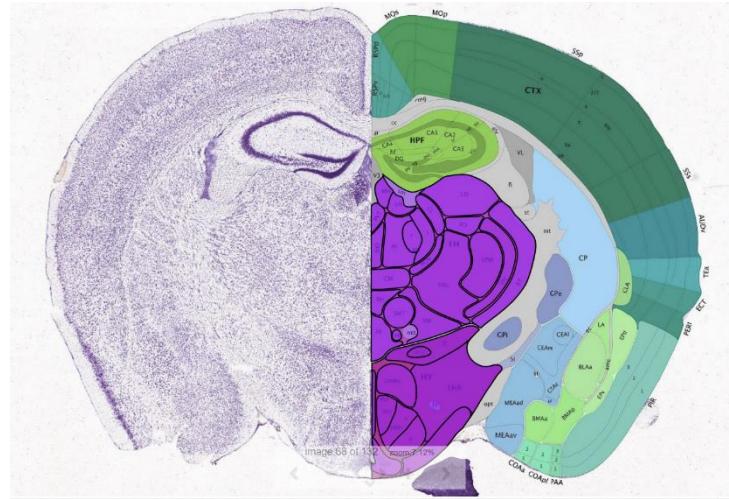
## Instance segmentation



Instances:

- Cells, nuclei, cats, dogs, cars, trees

## Semantic segmentation

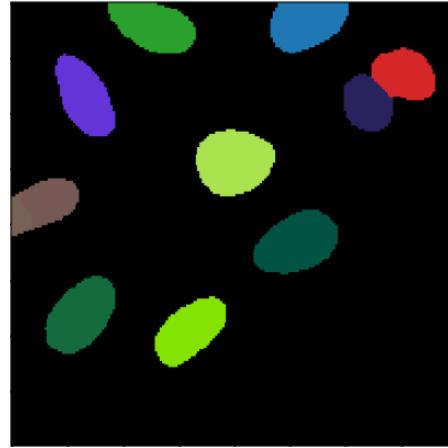


Regions:

- Anatomical, geographical
- All pixels belonging to the same type of object have the same value

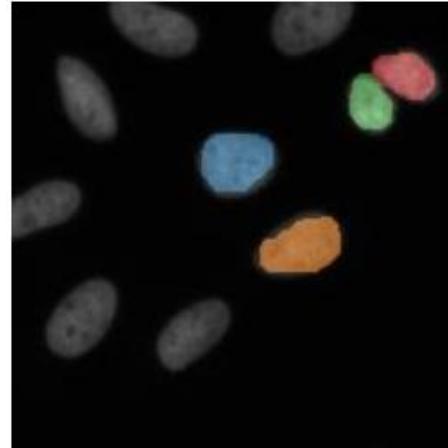
- Annotations are typically drawn by humans (e.g. to train machine learning models)

Instance segmentation



Semantic segmentation

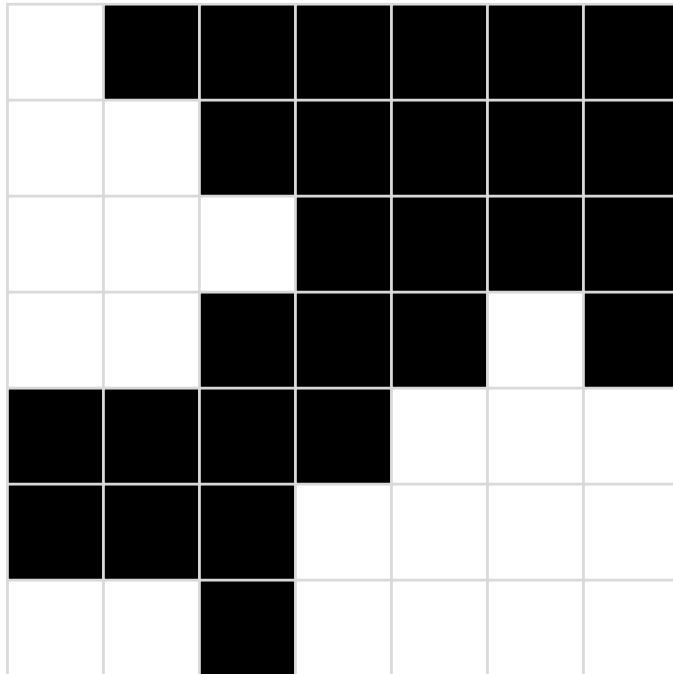
Sparse instance annotation



Sparse semantic annotation

# Connected component labelling

- In order to allow the computer differentiating objects, connected component analysis (CCA) is used to mark pixels belonging to different objects with different numbers
- Background pixels are marked with 0.
- The maximum intensity of a labelled map corresponds to the number of objects.



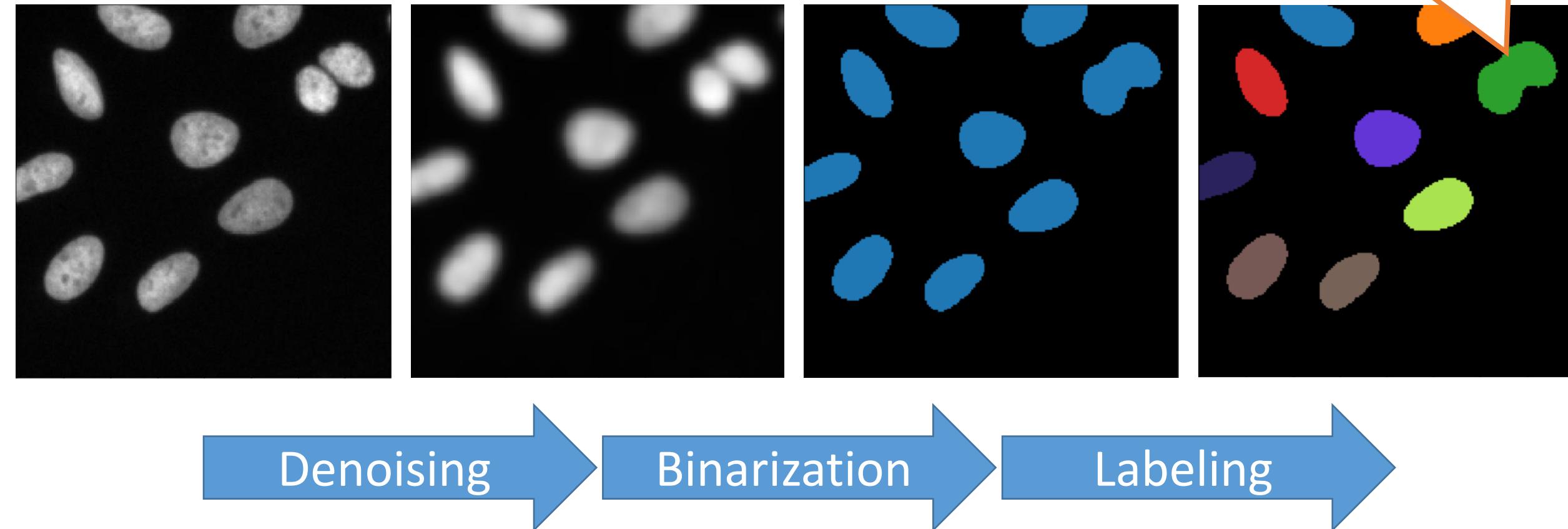
CCA

1	0	0	0	0	0	0
1	1	0	0	0	0	0
1	1	1	0	0	0	0
1	1	0	0	0	3	0
0	0	0	0	3	3	3
0	0	0	3	3	3	3
2	2	0	3	3	3	3

# Common image segmentation workflows

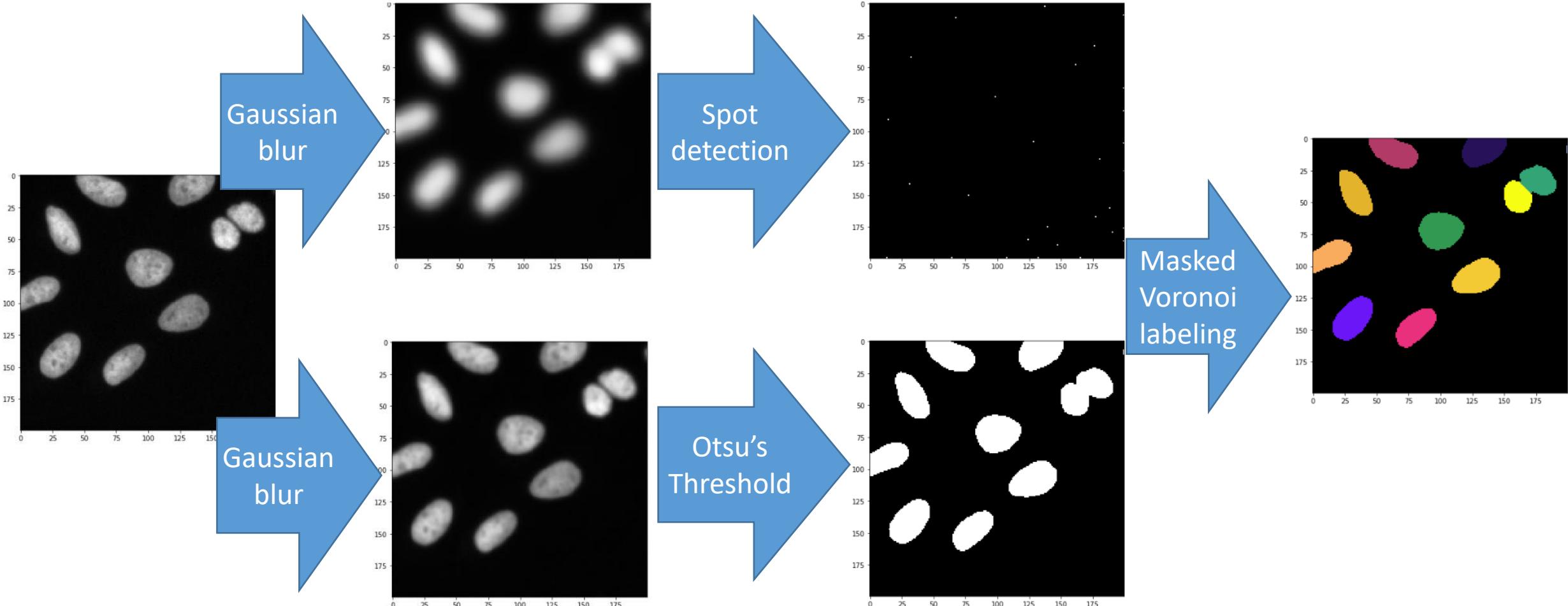
- Presumably the most common segmentation algorithm used for fluorescent microscopy images:
  - Gaussian blur, Otsu's Threshold, Connected Component Labeling

Limitation: Dense objects

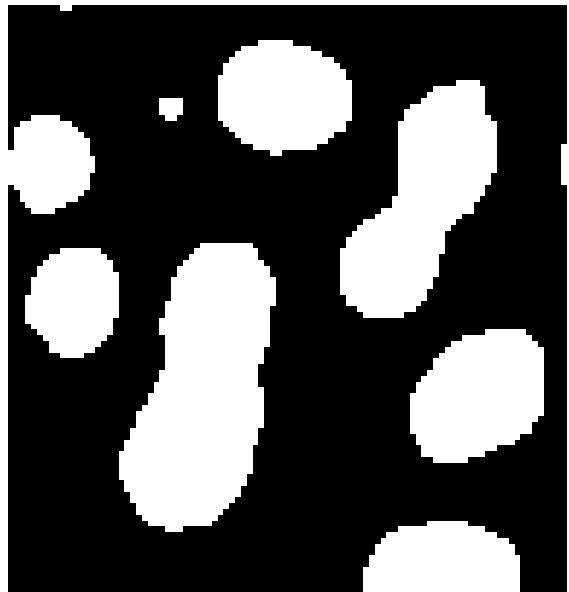


# Common image segmentation workflows

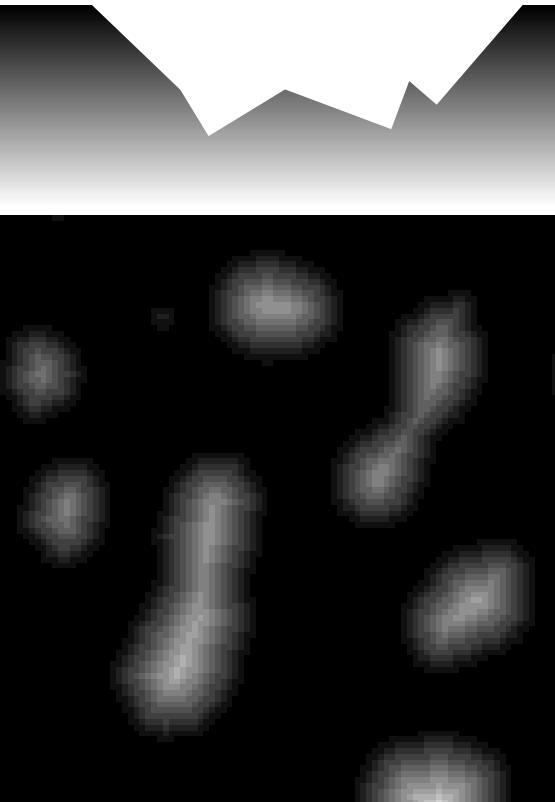
- Combination of Gaussian blur, Otsu's Threshold and Voronoi-labeling



- The watershed algorithm for binary images allows cutting one object into two where it's reasonable.

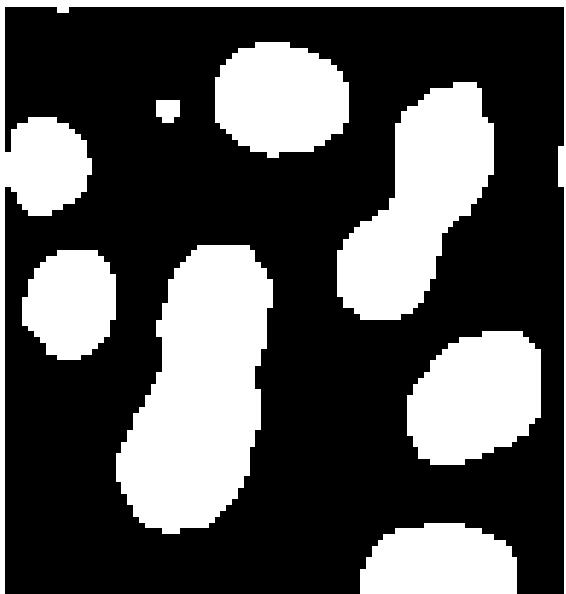


Binary segmentation

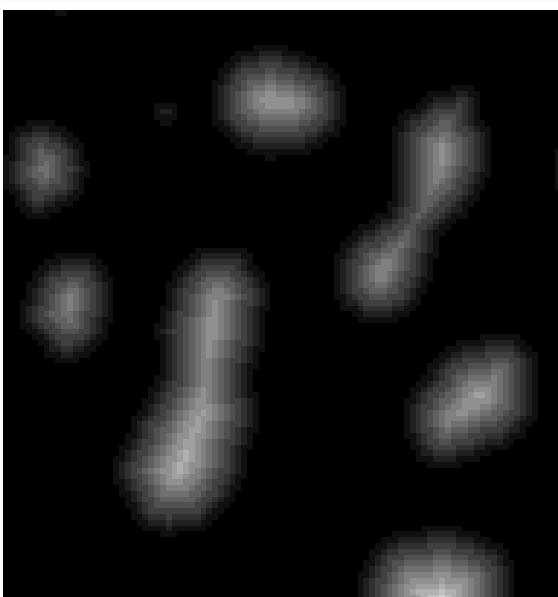
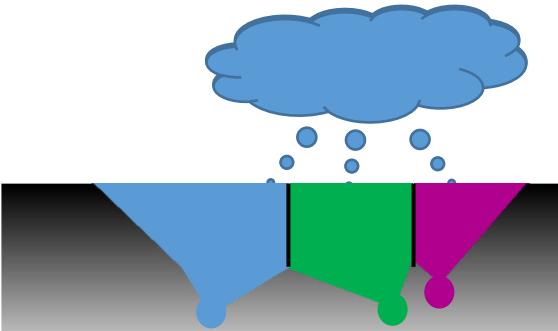


Distance map

- The watershed algorithm for binary images allows cutting one object into two where it's reasonable.



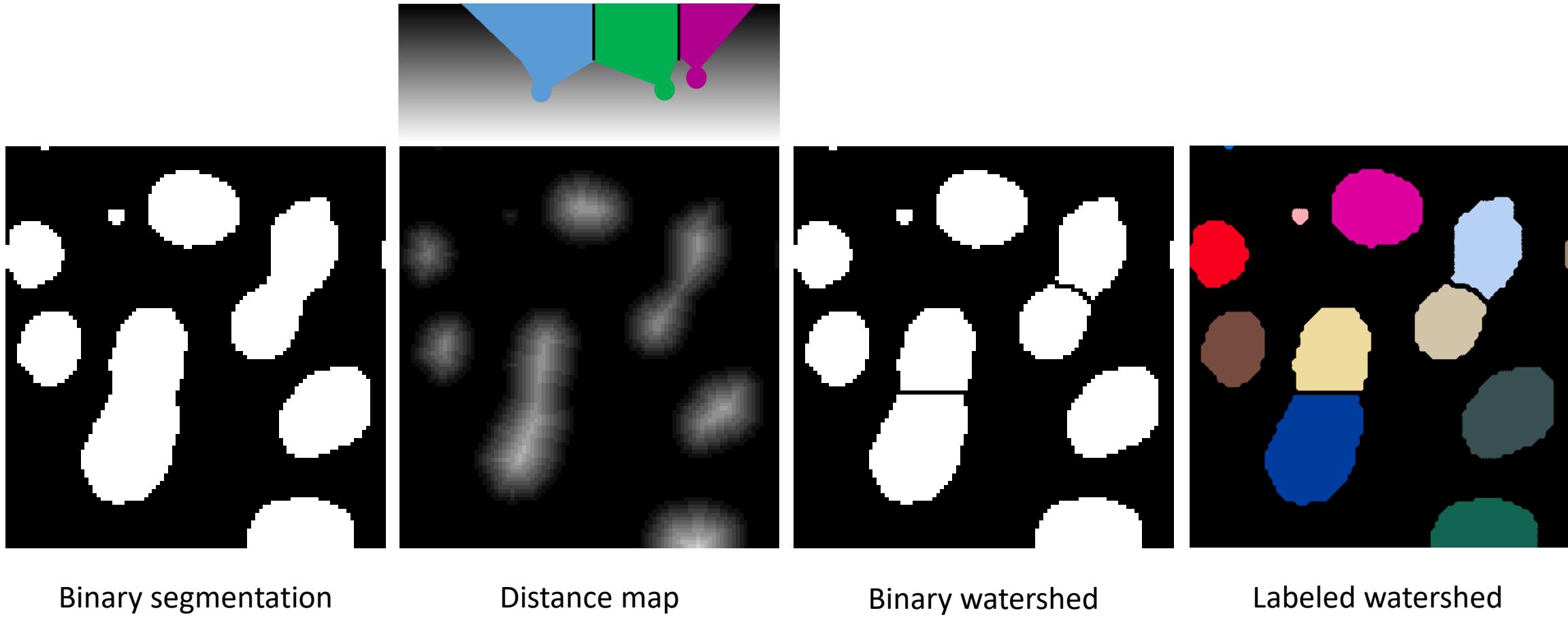
Binary segmentation



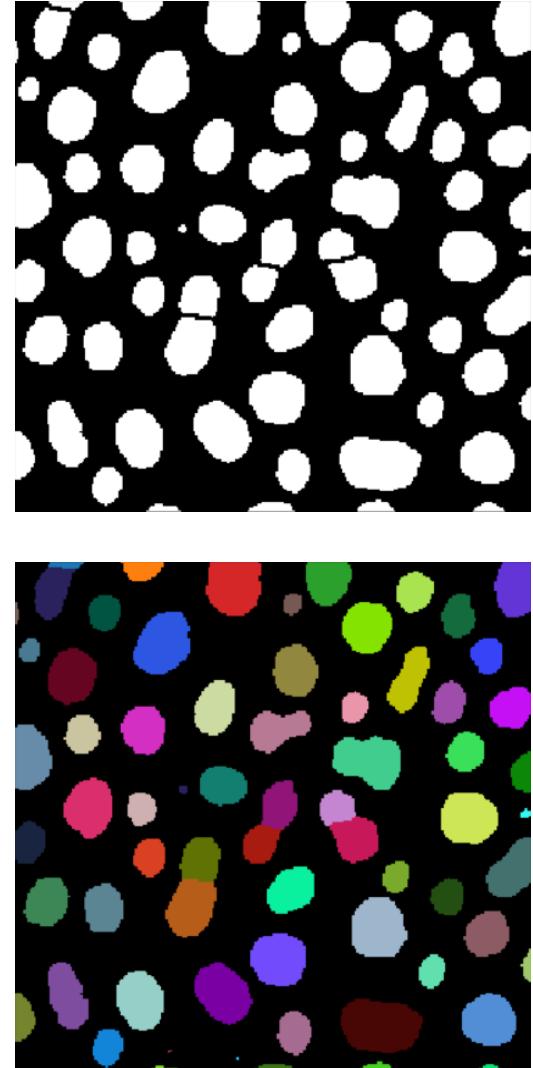
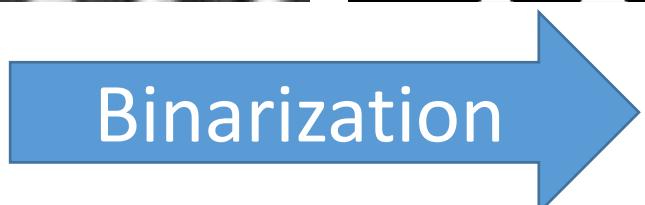
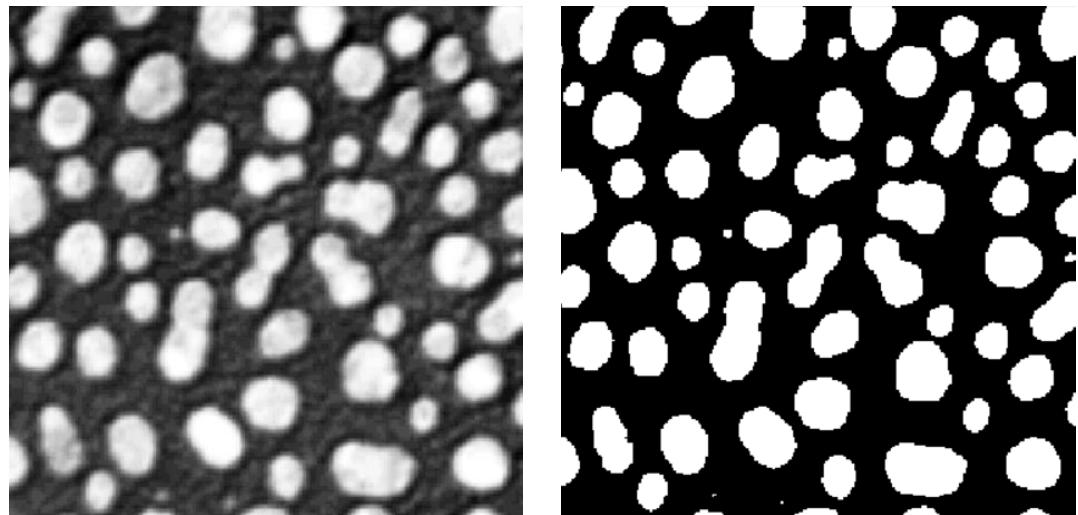
Distance map

# Watershed

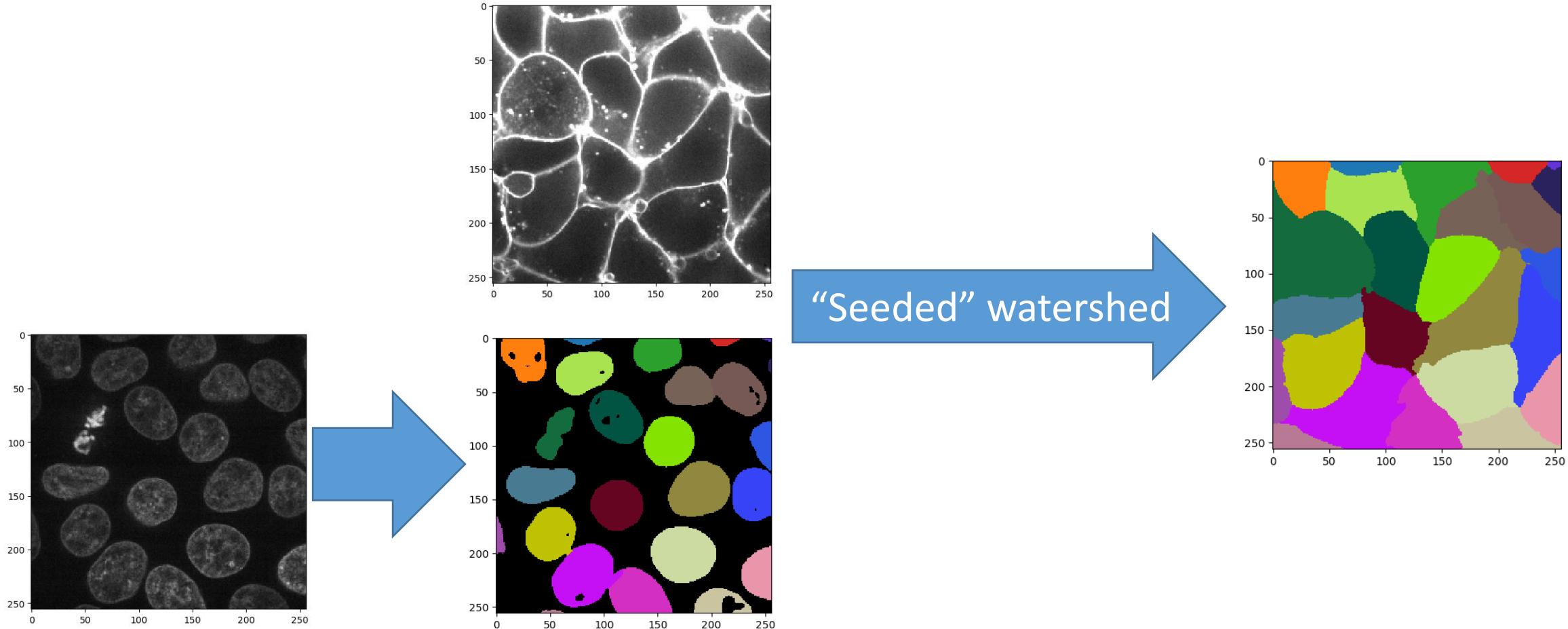
- The watershed algorithm for binary images allows cutting one object into two where it's reasonable.
- The watersheds are made from binary images. The algorithm does not take the original image into account!



- Split dense objects

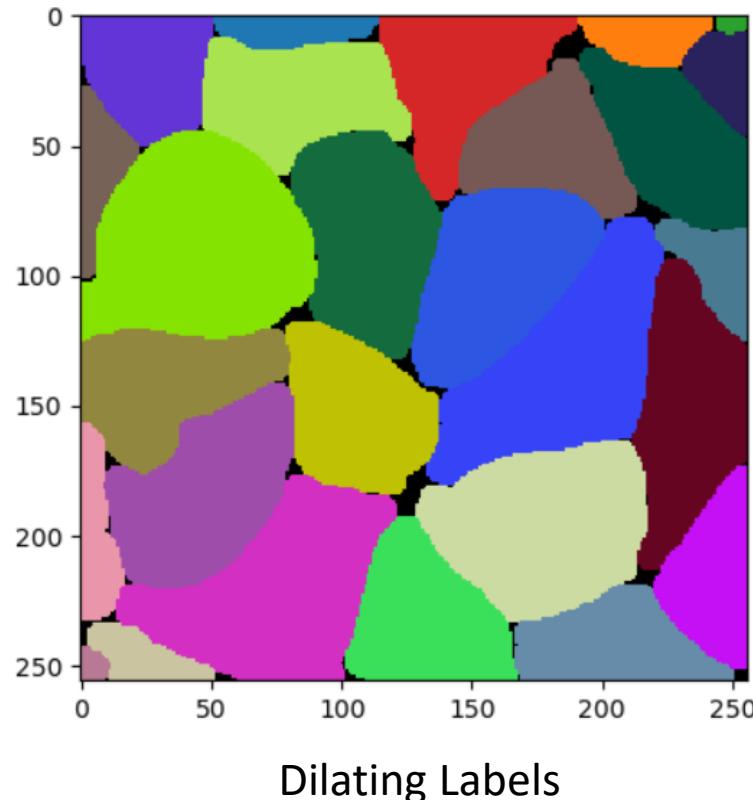
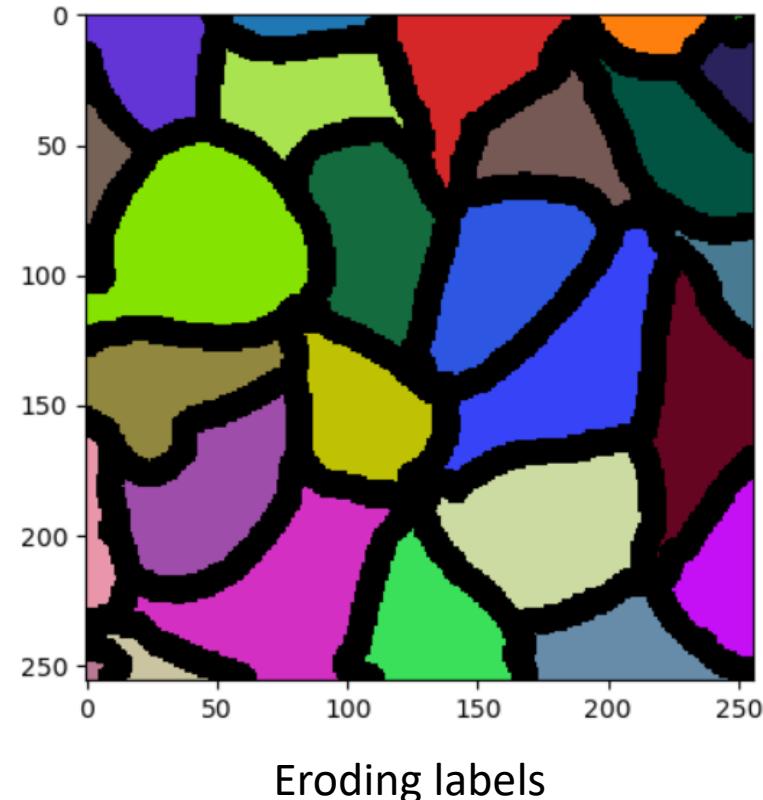
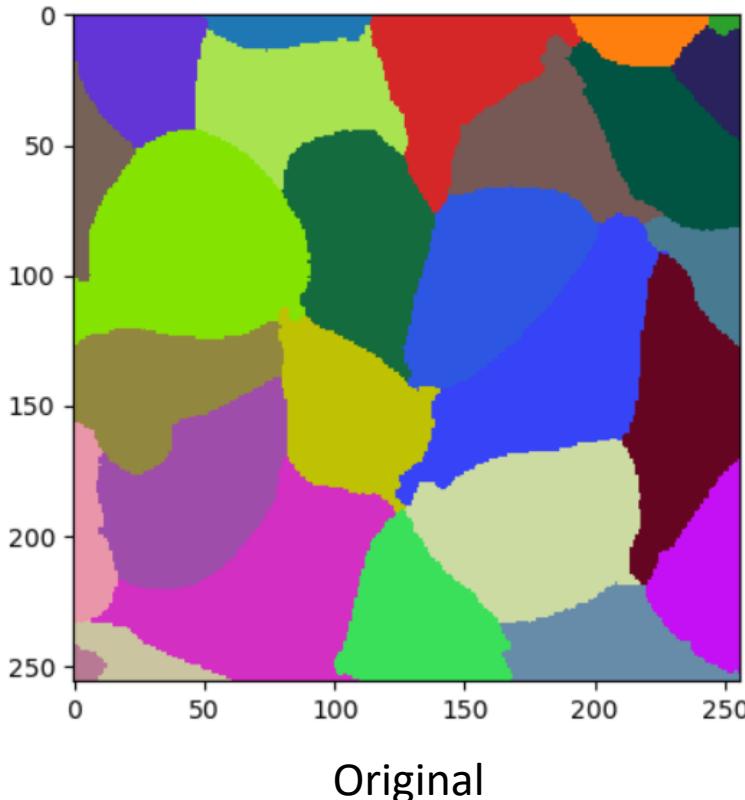


- Seeded watershed: Flood regions from pre-defined seeds
- Example: Flood cells from nuclei positions



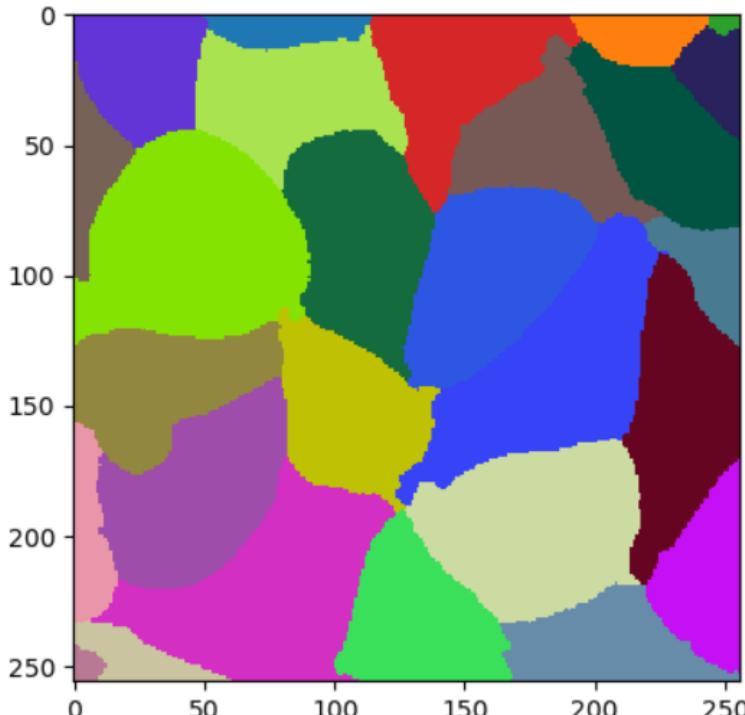
# Label post-processing / morphological operations

- ... similar to morphological operations on binary images

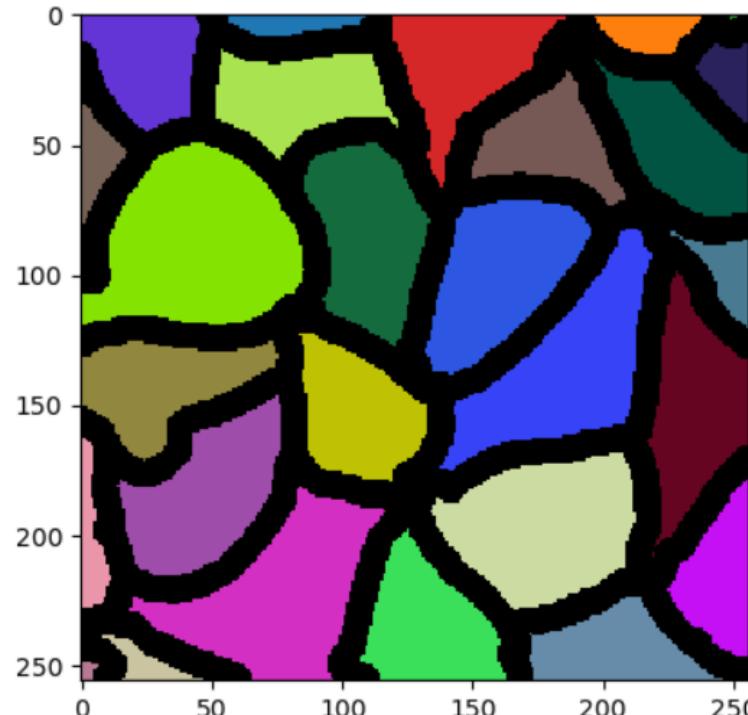


# Label post-processing / morphological operations

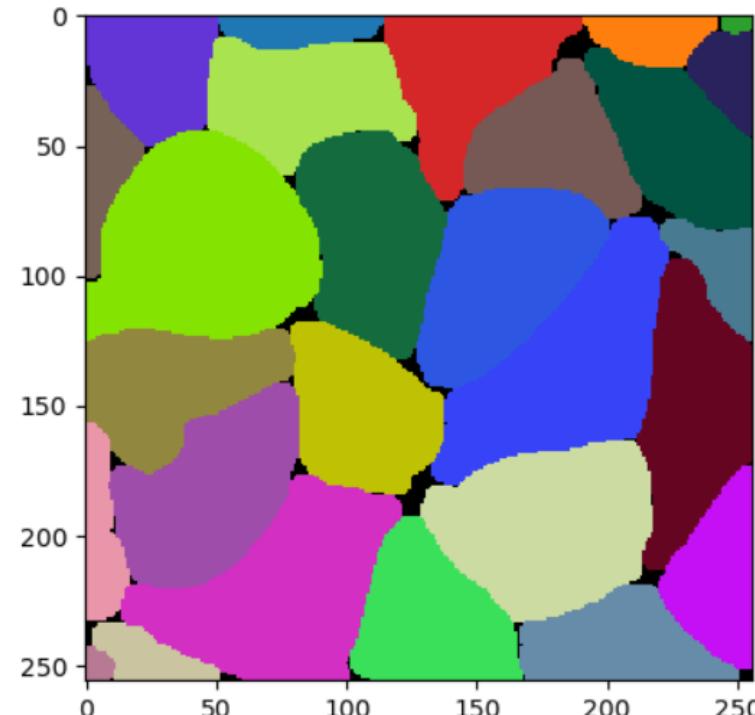
- ... similar to morphological operations on binary images



Original



Eroding labels



Dilating Labels

This combination is called

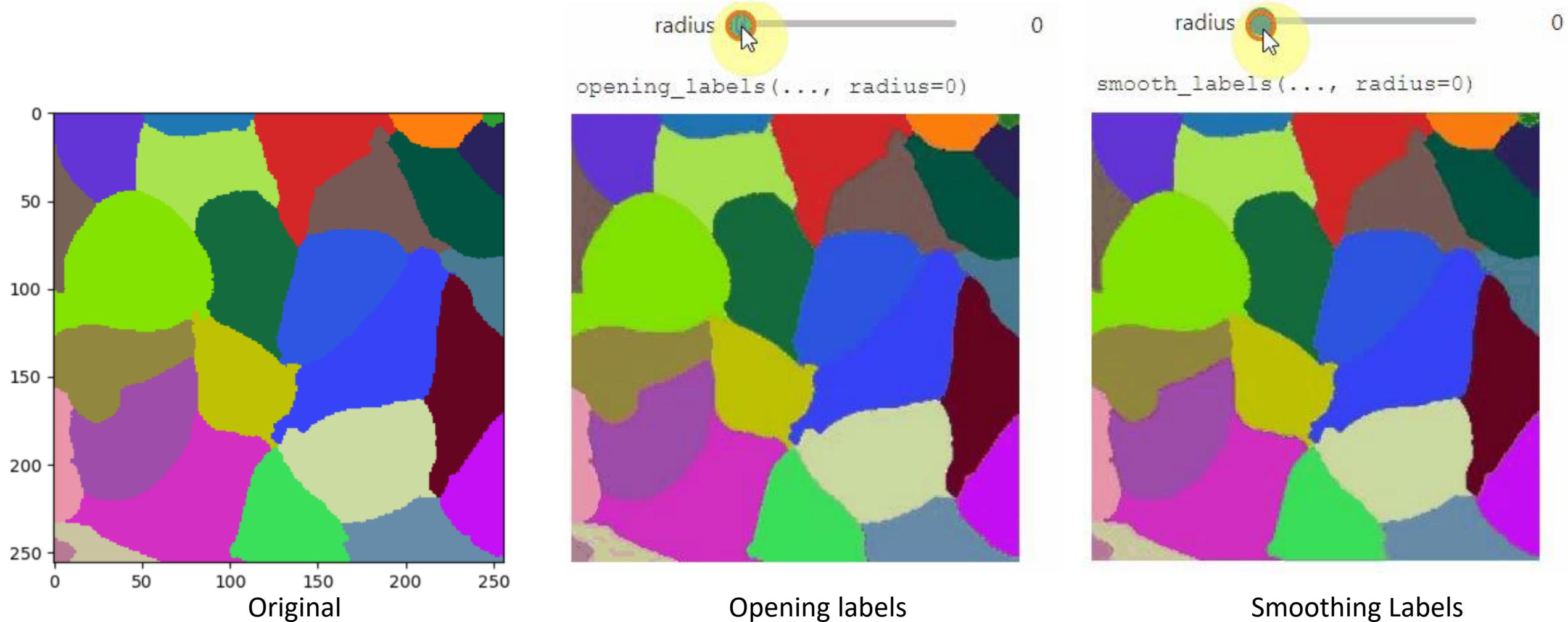
Opening

Closing

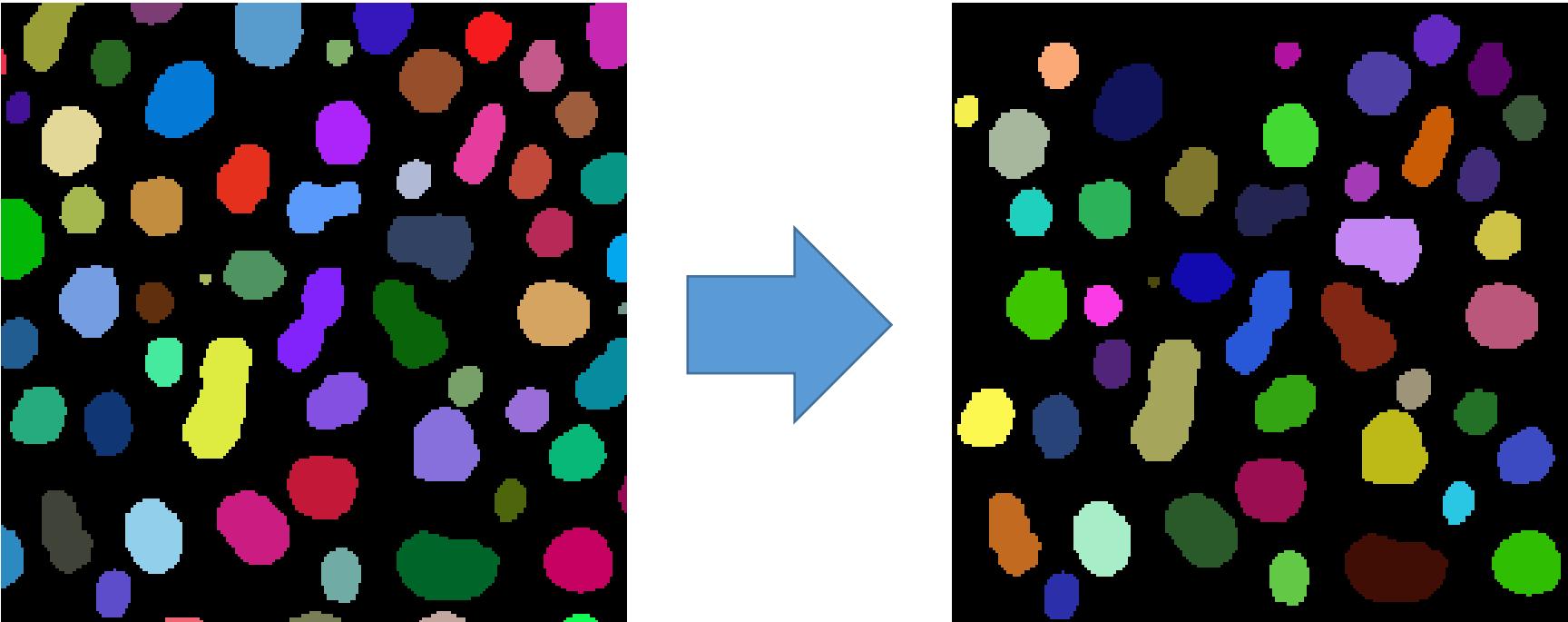
Epilepsy warning

# Label post-processing / morphological operations

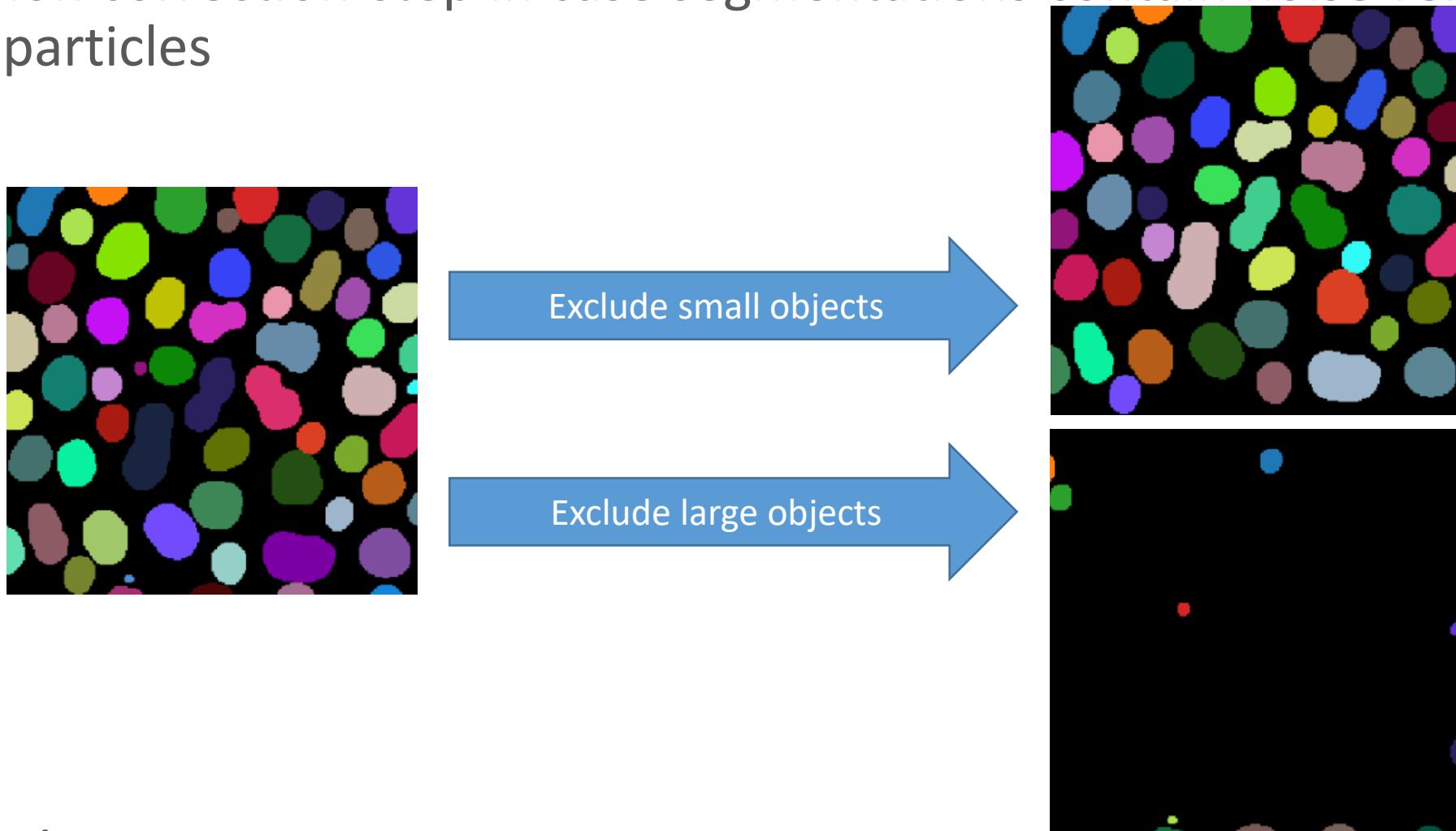
- ... similar to morphological operations on binary images



- Remove objects at the image border
- Their measurements (shape, size) would be misleading anyway



- Excluding small / large objects
- Common correction-step in case segmentations contain noise-related small particles



# Surface reconstruction

Robert Haase

Using materials from

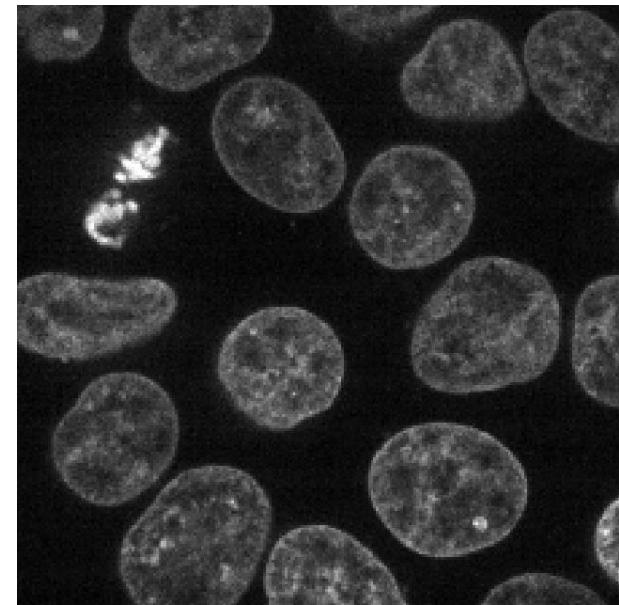
Alba Villaronga Luque and Jesse Veenvliet, MPI-CBG Dresden

Johannes Soltwedel, PoL, TU Dresden

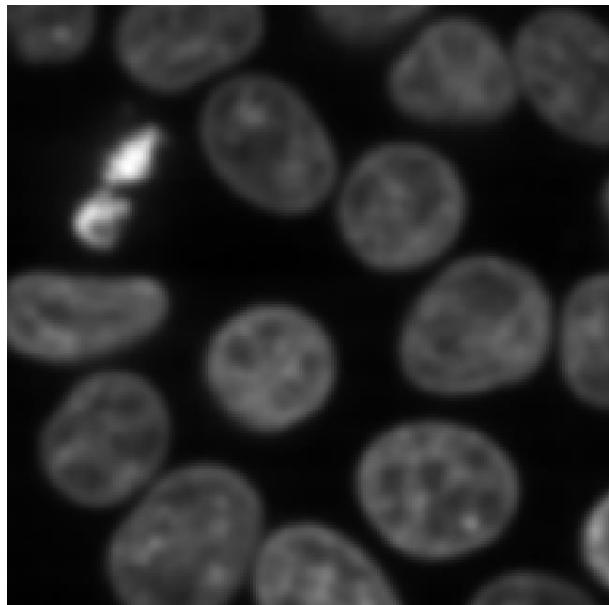
April 2023

# Motivation: Surface reconstruction

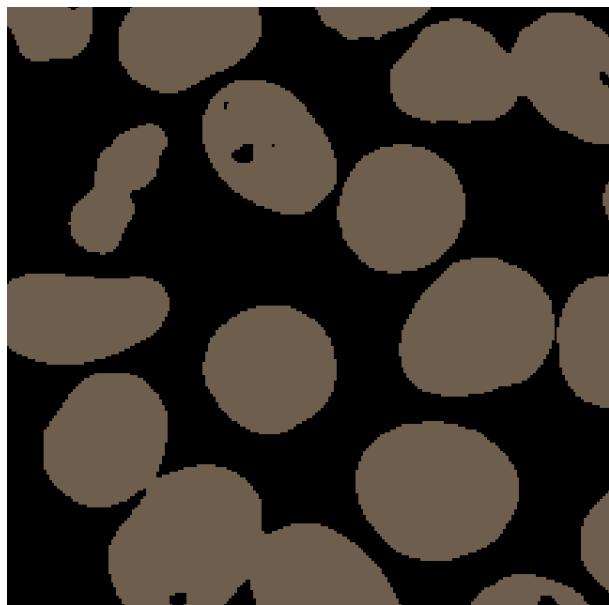
- Pixel and voxel arrays can be huge in memory
- Processing 3D arrays is time-consuming



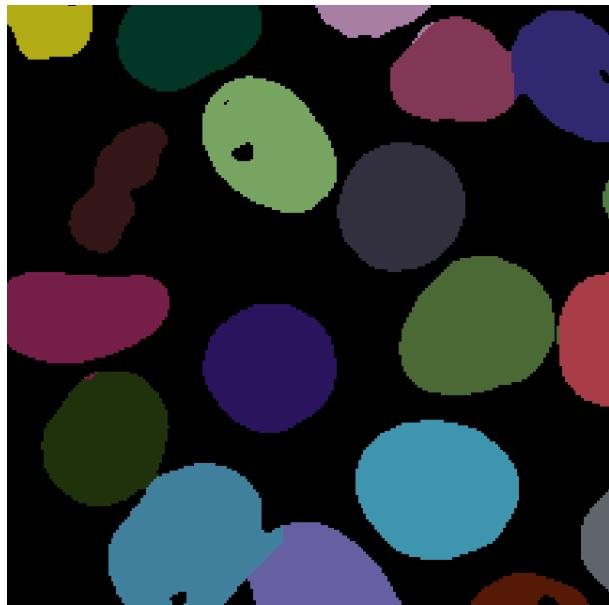
1024 x1024 x 100  
16-bit image



1024 x1024 x 100  
16-bit image



1024 x1024 x 100  
8-bit image



1024 x1024 x 100  
16-bit image

How much memory does  
this workflow cost?

700 MB

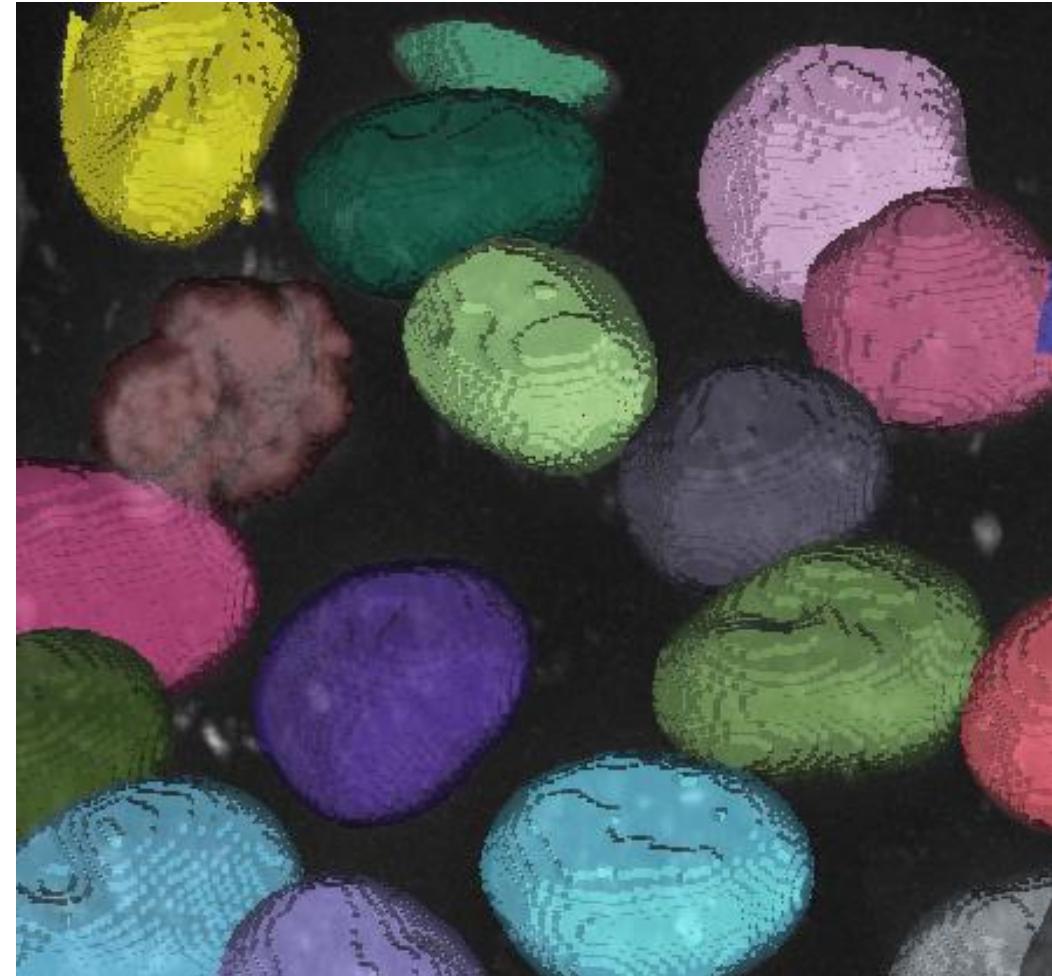
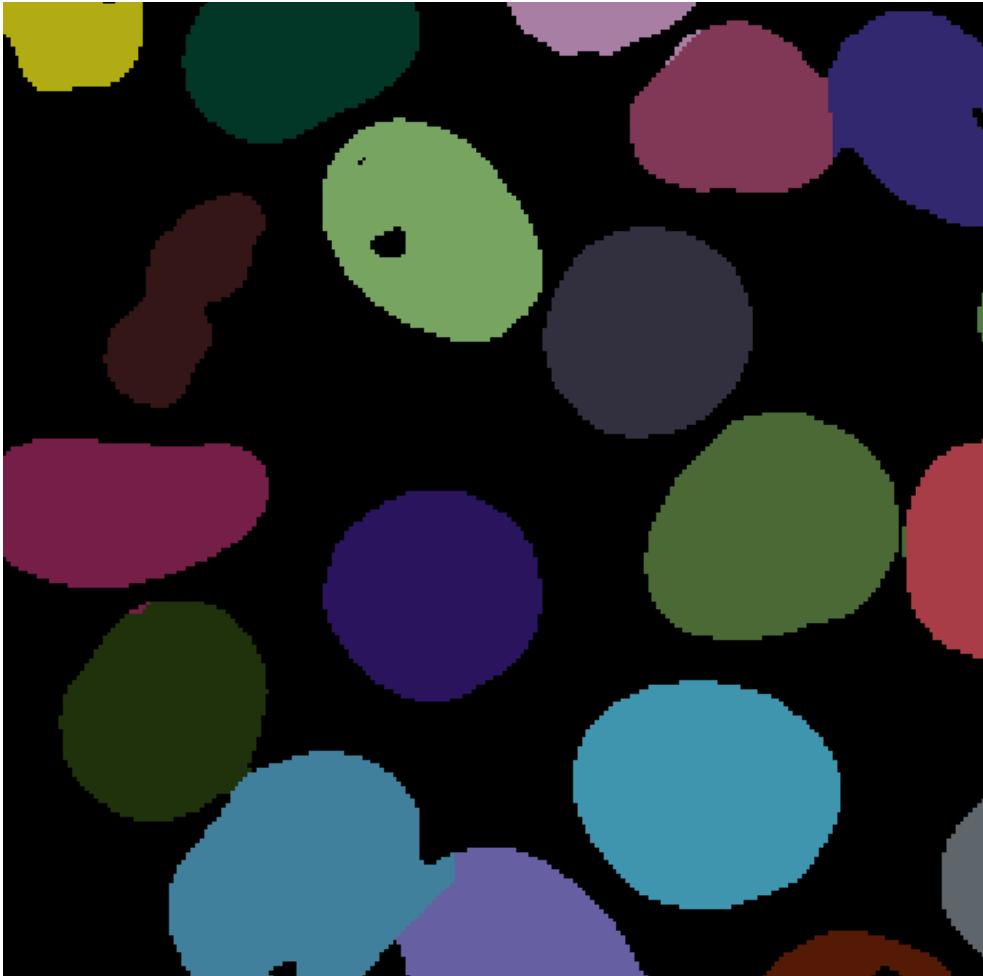
400 MB

4 GB

7 GB

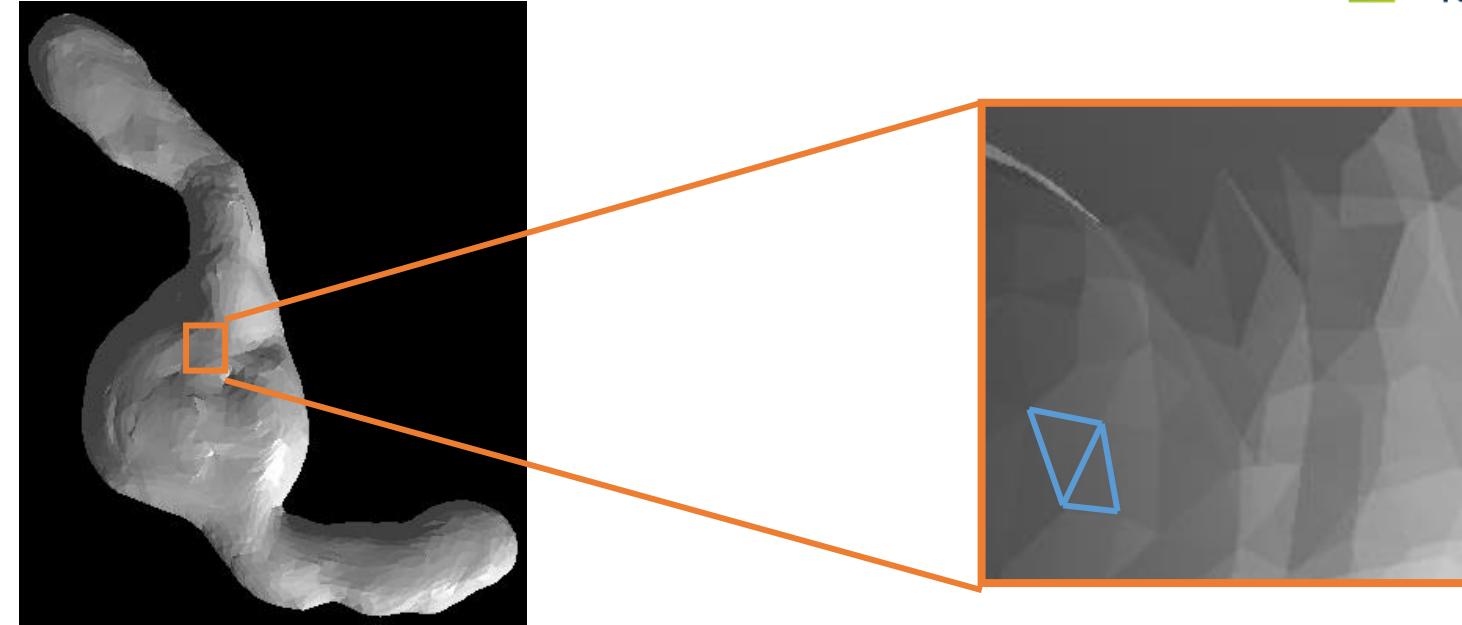
# Motivation: Surface reconstruction

- Pixel and voxel borders introduce artifacts, potentially problematic for measurements, e.g. surface area



# Surface meshes

- Points on a surfaces connected by triangles form a surface mesh



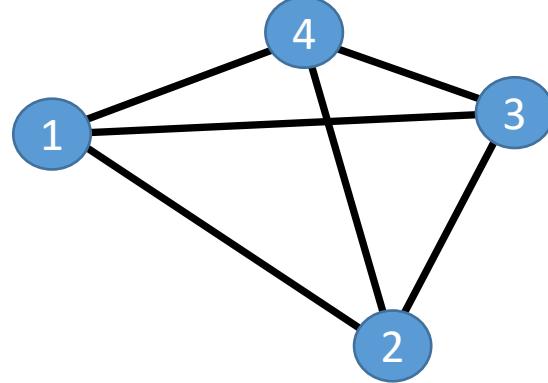
“Vertices” / points

Point x	Point y	Point z
$x_1$	$y_1$	$z_1$
$X_2$	$Y_2$	$Z_2$
$X_3$	$Y_3$	$Z_3$
$X_4$	$Y_4$	$Z_4$
...	...	...

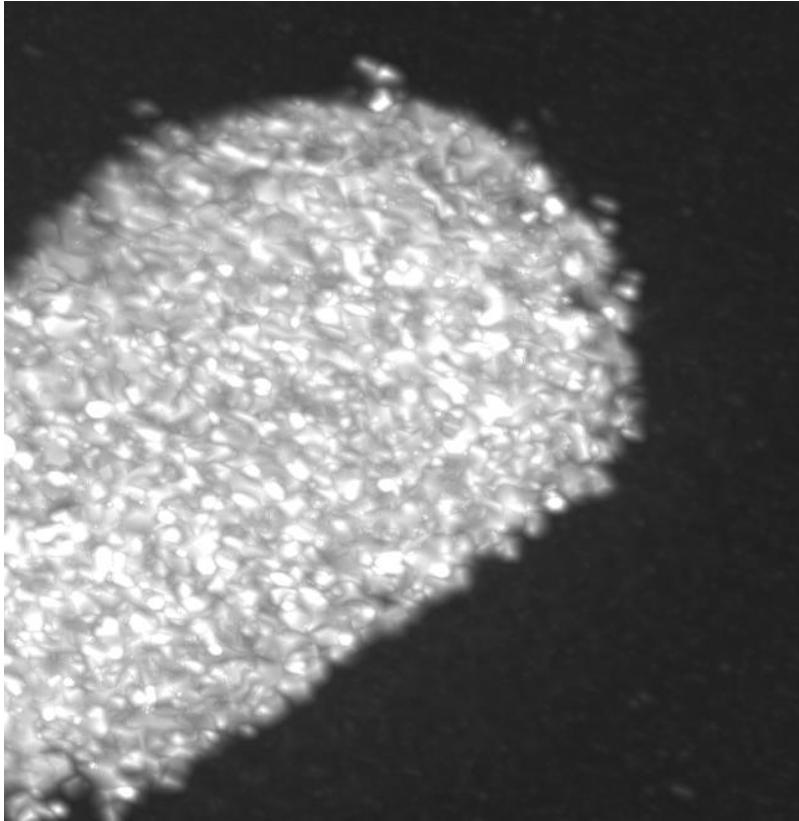
+

“Faces” / Triangles

Point 1	Point 2	Point 3
1	2	3
1	2	4
2	3	4
1	3	4



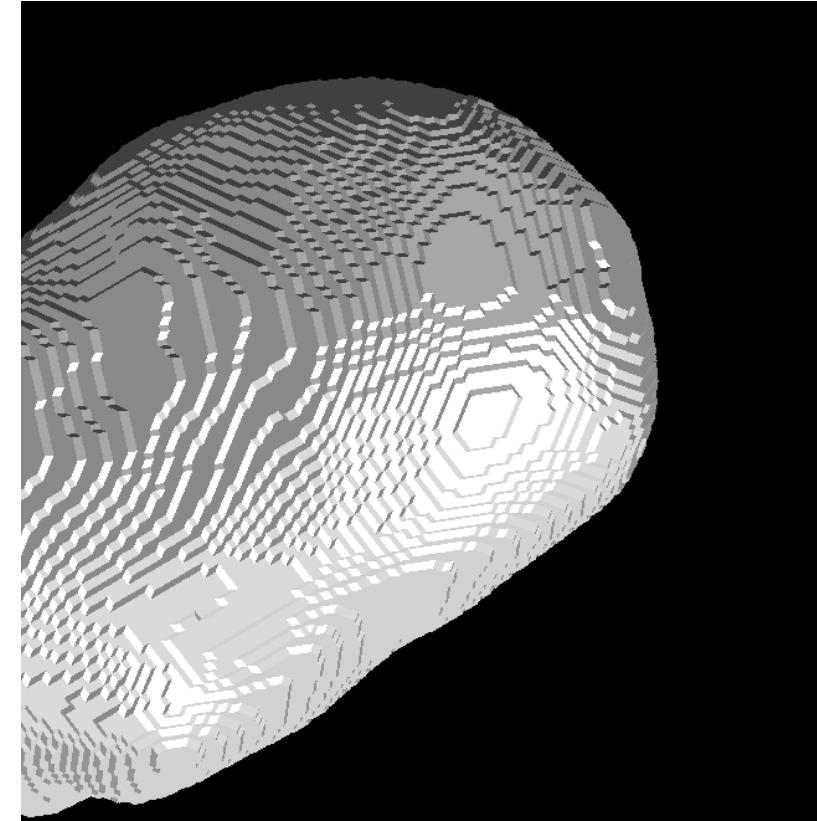
# Surface reconstruction



3D image of nuclei



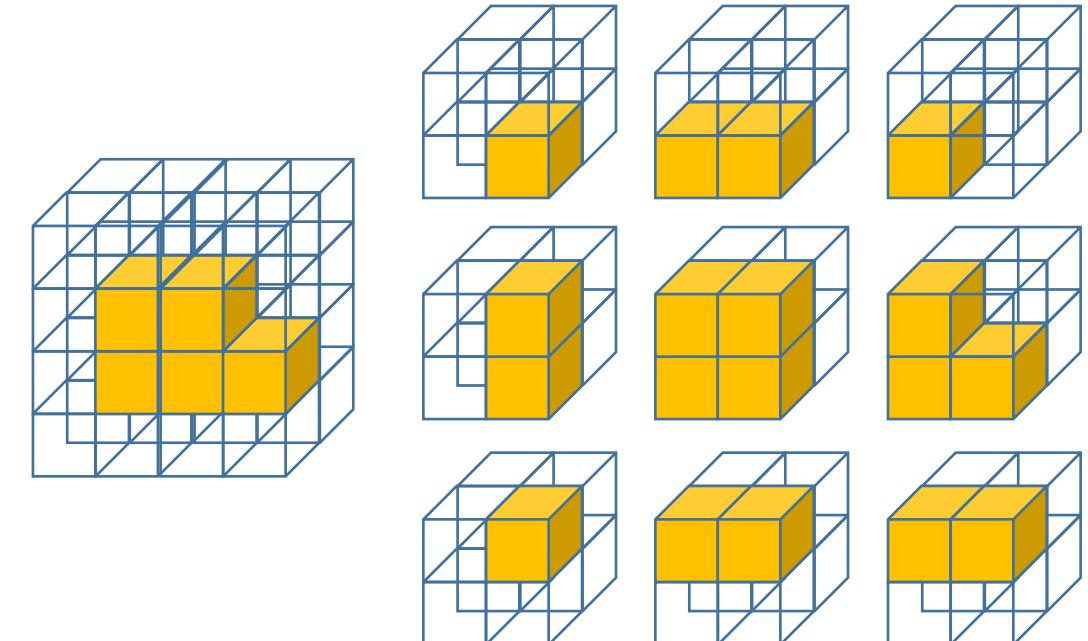
Gaussian filtered



Binary 3D image  
(visualized as surface mesh)

# Marching cubes algorithm

- Starting point: 3D binary image
- Cuts the image in small cubes and iterates over them

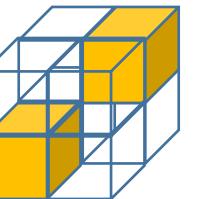
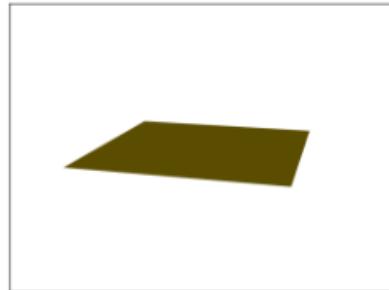
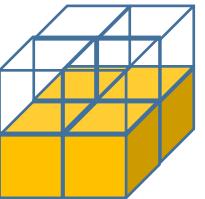
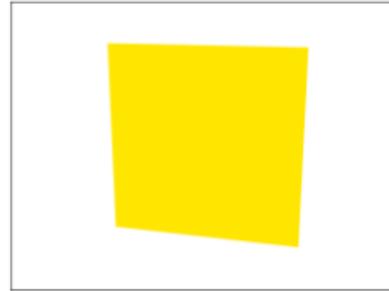
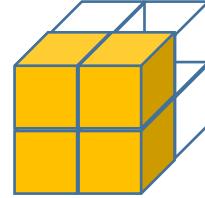
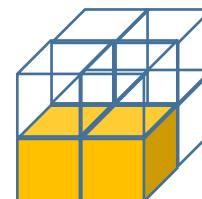
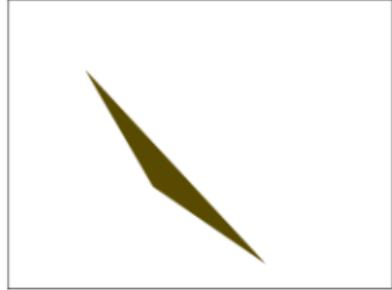
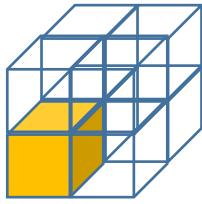
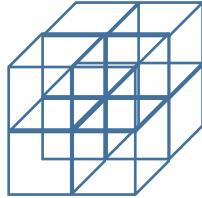


Split into cubes

Lorensen, William E.; Cline, Harvey E. (1 August 1987). "Marching cubes: A high resolution 3D surface construction algorithm". *ACM SIGGRAPH Computer Graphics*. **21** (4): 163-169. [CiteSeerX 10.1.1.545.613](https://doi.org/10.1145/37402.37422). doi:[10.1145/37402.37422](https://doi.org/10.1145/37402.37422).

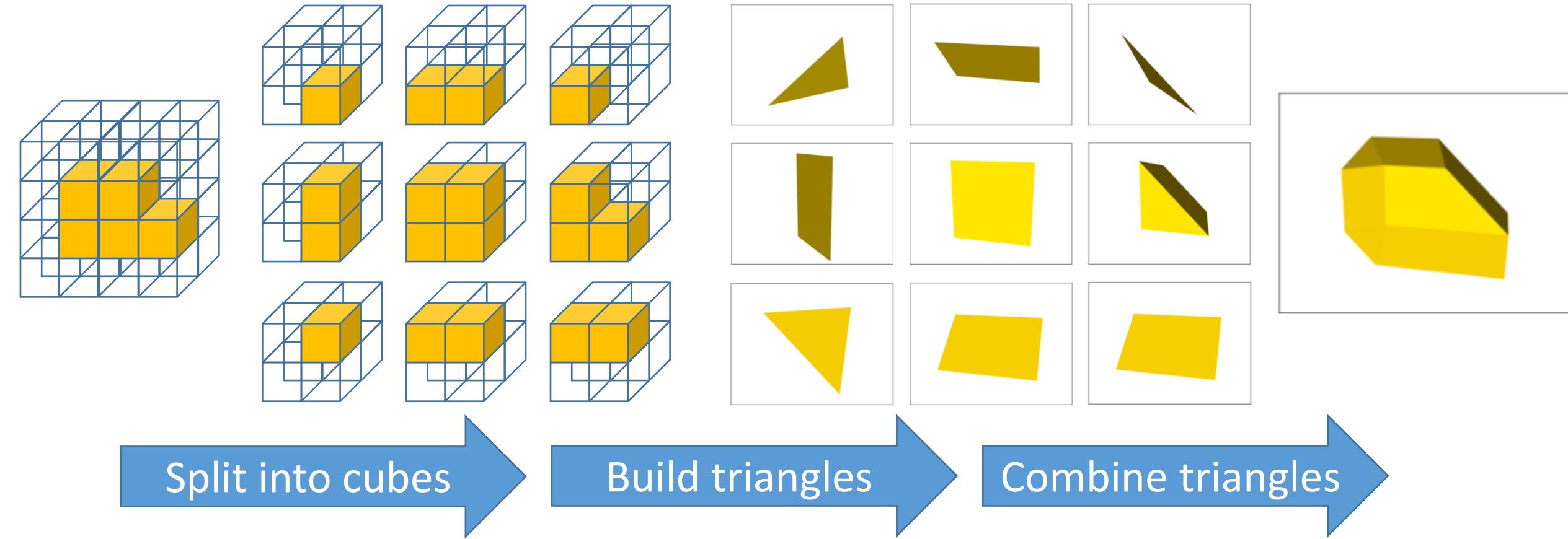
# Marching cubes algorithm

- Starting point: 3D binary image
- Cuts the image in small cubes and iterates over them



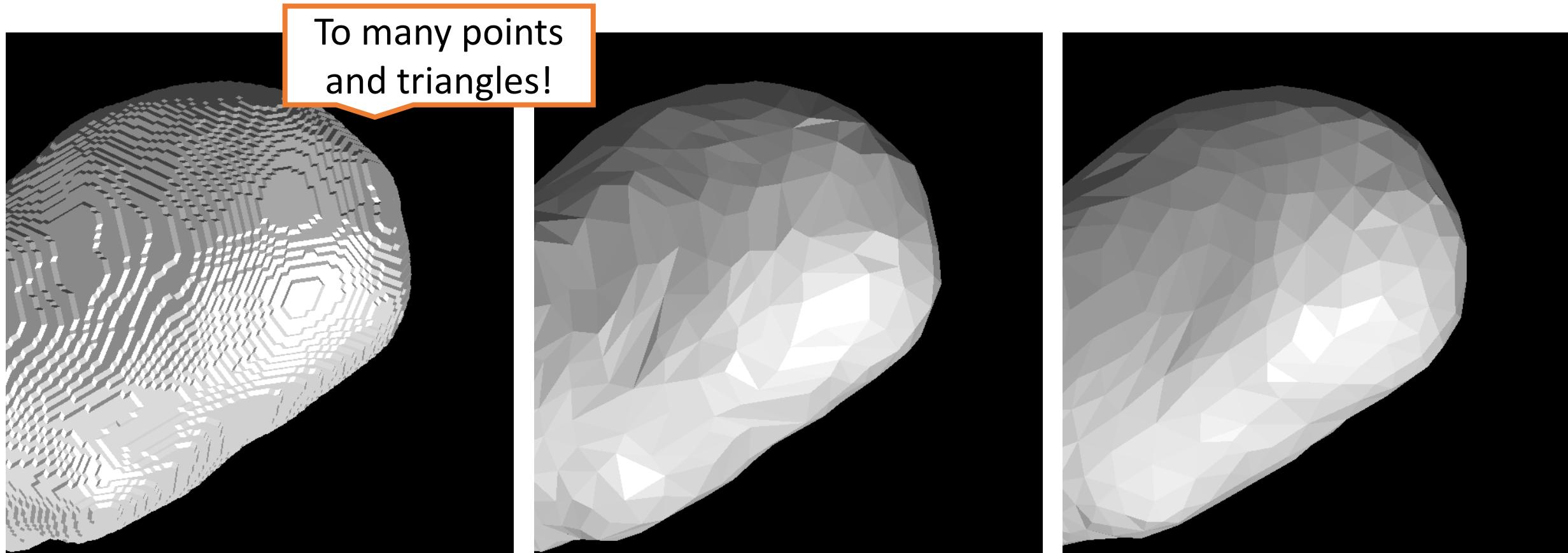
# Marching cubes algorithm

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Lorensen, William E.; Cline, Harvey E. (1 August 1987). "Marching cubes: A high resolution 3D surface construction algorithm". *ACM SIGGRAPH Computer Graphics*. **21** (4): 163-169. [CiteSeerX 10.1.1.545.613](https://doi.org/10.1145/37402.37422). doi:[10.1145/37402.37422](https://doi.org/10.1145/37402.37422).

- Necessary to better match biological reality.



Marching cubes result

Simplified mesh  
(less points, locally averaged)

Smoothed mesh  
(position locally planarized)

Data derived from [AV Luque and JV Veenvliet \(2023\)](#)  
licensed [CC-BY](#) : <https://zenodo.org/record/7603081>

# Surface post-processing

- Every processing step has consequences errors of later measurements
- Depends on desired measurement



Surface mesh



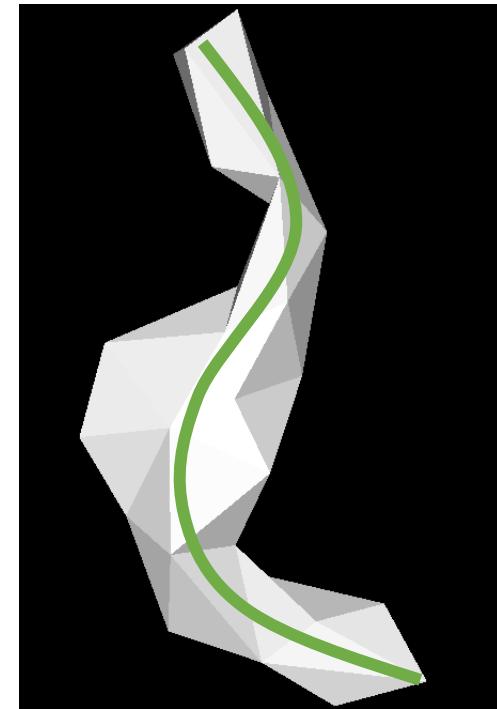
Simplified by factor 0.5

Number of small  
concave regions



Simplified by factor 0.05

Total length



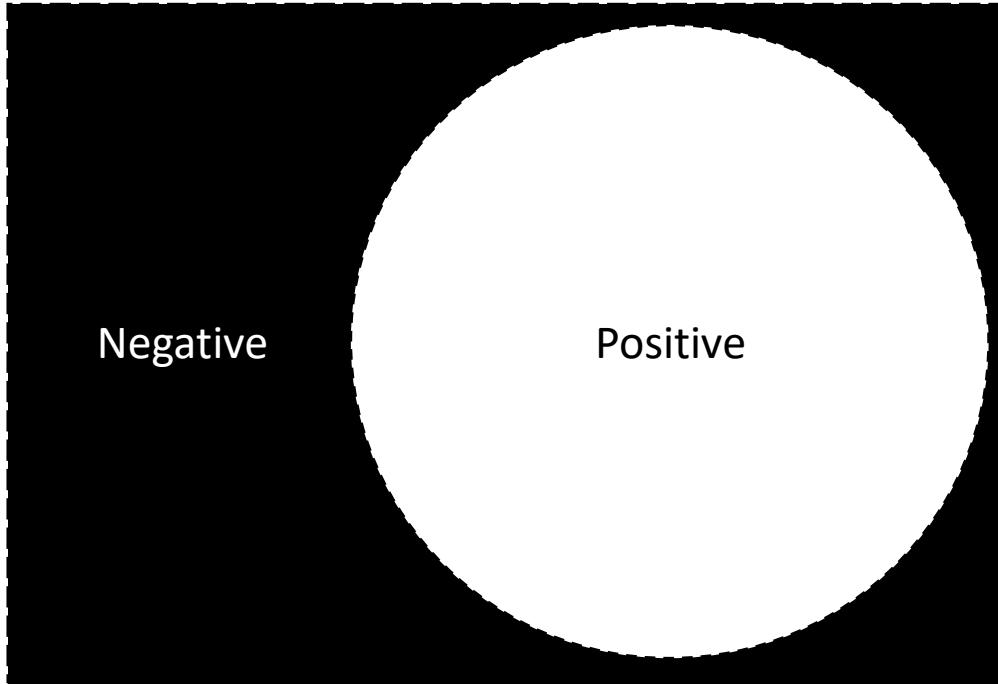
Simplified by factor 0.01

# Segmentation quality estimation

Robert Haase

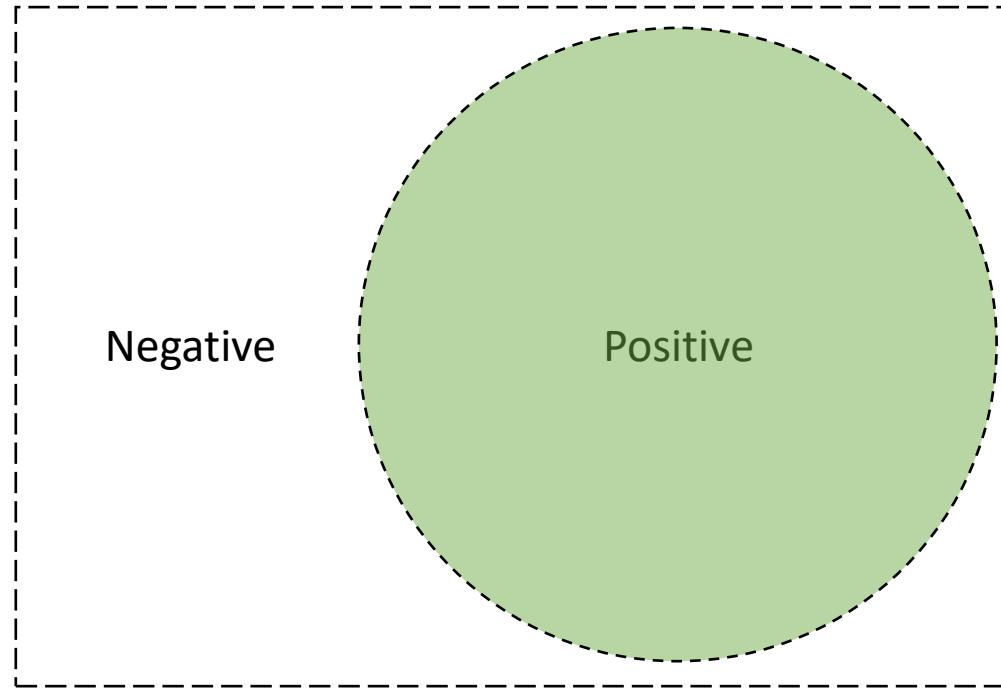
# Segmentation quality estimation

- In general
  - Define what's positive and what's negative.



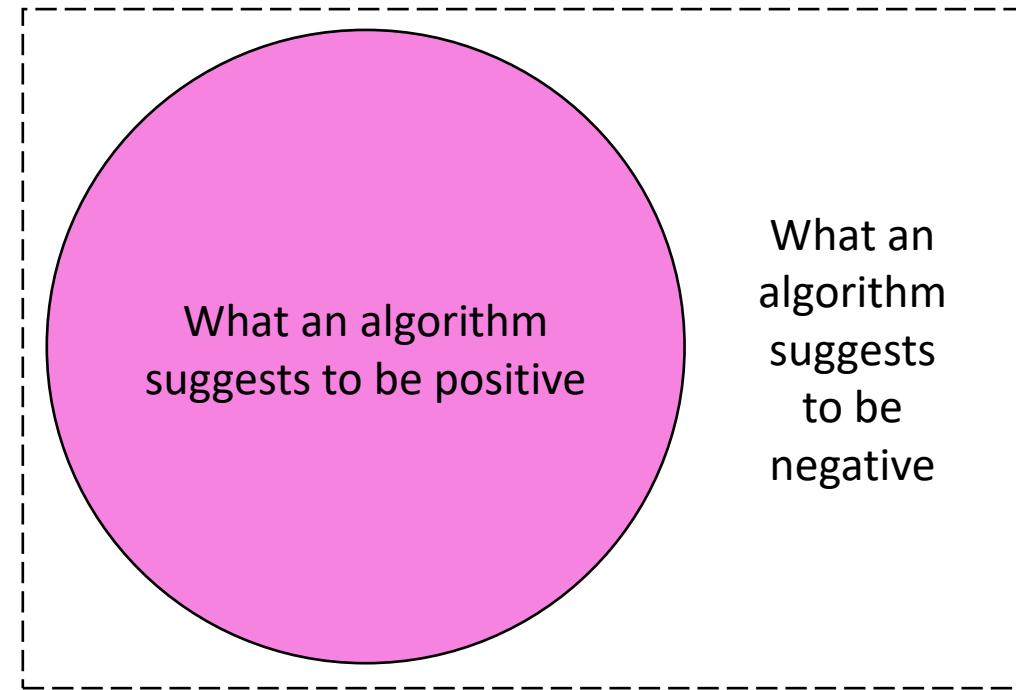
# Segmentation quality estimation

- In general
  - Define what's positive and what's negative.



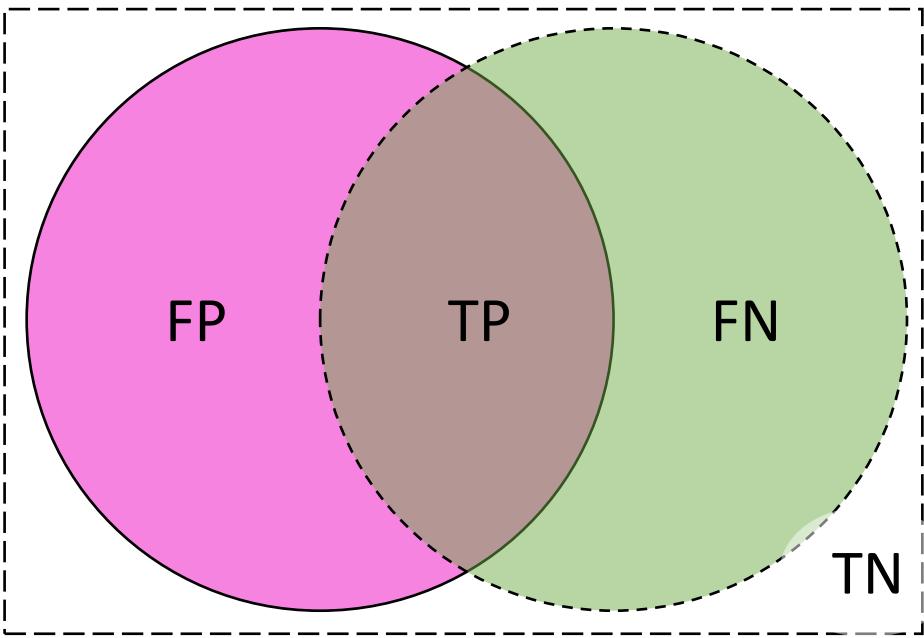
# Segmentation quality estimation

- In general
  - Define what's positive and what's negative.



# Segmentation quality estimation

- In general
  - Define what's positive and what's negative.
  - Compare with a reference to figure out what was true and false
- Welcome to the Theory of Sets



A	Prediction A
B	Reference B (ground truth)
ROI	Region of interest
TP	True-positive
FN	False-negative
FP	False-positive
TN	True-negative

Overlap  
(a.k.a. Jaccard index)  $\frac{TP}{TP + FN + FP}$

How much do A and B overlap?

Precision  $\frac{TP}{TP + FP}$

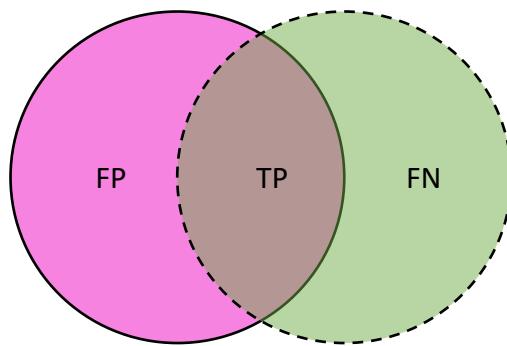
What fraction of points that were predicted as positives were really positive?

Recall  
(a.k.a. sensitivity)  $\frac{TP}{TP + FN}$

What fraction of positives points were predicted as positives?

# Pixel-wise versus Object-wise evaluation

- Pixel wise: Segmentation quality
- Object wise: Detection quality



Precision

$$\frac{TP}{TP + FP}$$

Recall  
(a.k.a. sensitivity)

$$\frac{TP}{TP + FN}$$



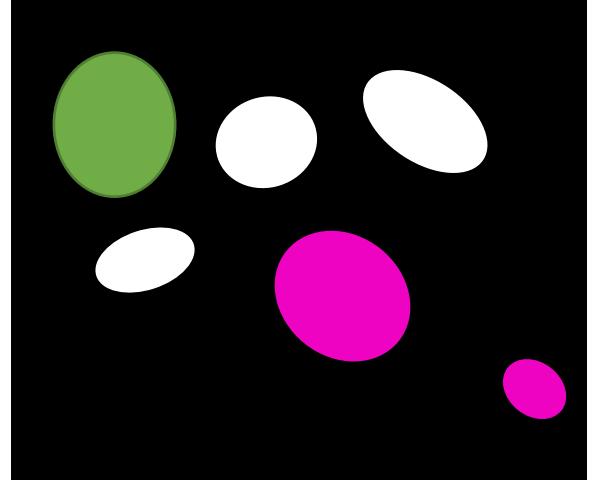
True-positive: 4

False-negative: 5

False-positive: 2

Precision:  $4/6 = 66\%$

Recall:  $4/9 = 44\%$



True-positive: 3

False-negative: 1

False-positive: 2

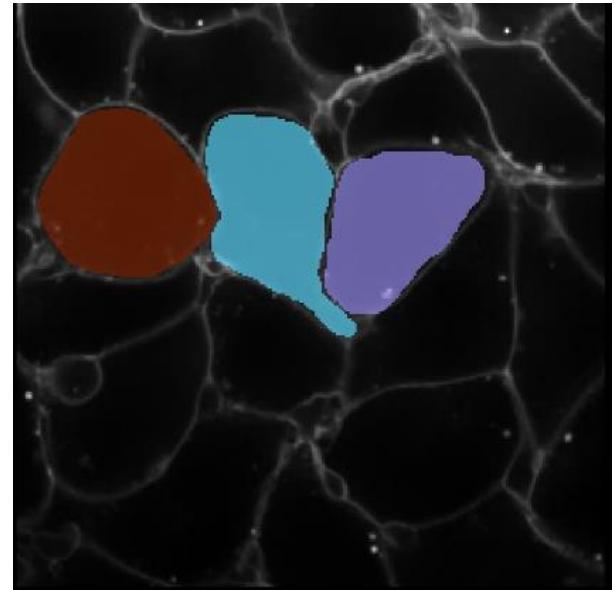
Precision:  $3/4 = 75\%$

Recall:  $3/5 = 60\%$

# Pixel-wise versus Object-wise evaluation

- Average Overlap for all ground-truth objects
- <https://github.com/haesleinhuepf/the-segmentation-game>



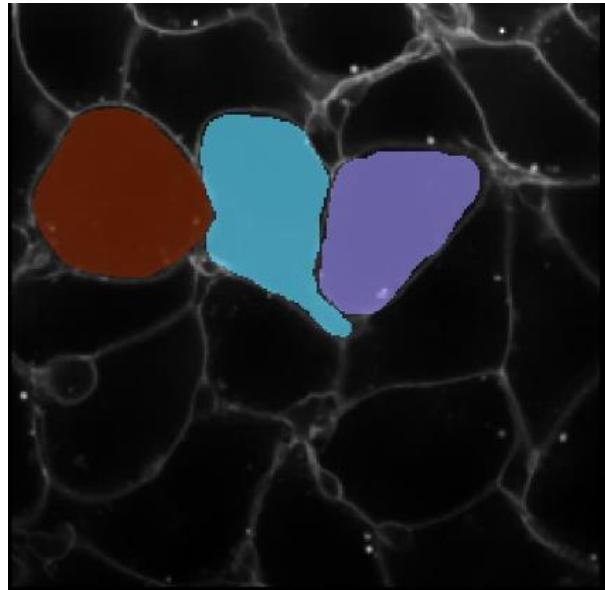


This is a ...

Sparse  
instance  
segmentation

Sparse  
semantic  
segmentation

- From some sparsely labeled objects we can estimate segmentation quality



Sparse  
instance  
annotation



$J = 0.35$



$J = 0.66$



$J = 0.69$

Source: <https://github.com/haesleinhuepf/napari-workflow-optimizer>

# Segmentation quality estimation

- Voxel-wise Youden-Index

$$YI = p_{TP} + p_{TN} - 1$$

- Volume error

$$\Delta_V = V_A - V_B$$

$$\delta_V = \frac{\Delta_V}{V_B}$$

- Dice Index

$$DI(A, B) = \frac{2|A \cap B|}{|A| + |B|}$$

- Jaccard Index

$$JI(A, B) = \frac{|A \cap B|}{|A \cup B|} = \frac{DI}{2 - DI}$$

- Contour distance

$$d_{e,min}(a, B) = \min(d_e(a, b) | b \in B)$$

$$\bar{d}_c(A, B) = \frac{\sum_{\forall a \in C(A)} d_{e,min}(a, C(B))}{|C(A)|}$$

$$\bar{d}_{bil,c}(A, B) = \frac{\bar{d}_c(A, B) + \bar{d}_c(B, A)}{2}$$

- Hausdorff distance

$$d_H(A, B) = \max(d_{e,min}(a, B) | a \in A)$$

$$d_{bil,H}(A, B) = \max(d_H(A, B), d_H(B, A))$$

- Simplified Hausdorff distance

$$d_H(A, B) = \max(d_{e,min}(a, C(B)) | a \in C(A))$$

- Volume standard deviation

$$\delta_{\bar{V}} = 2 \frac{|V_A - V_B|}{|V_A + V_B|}$$

- Classification error

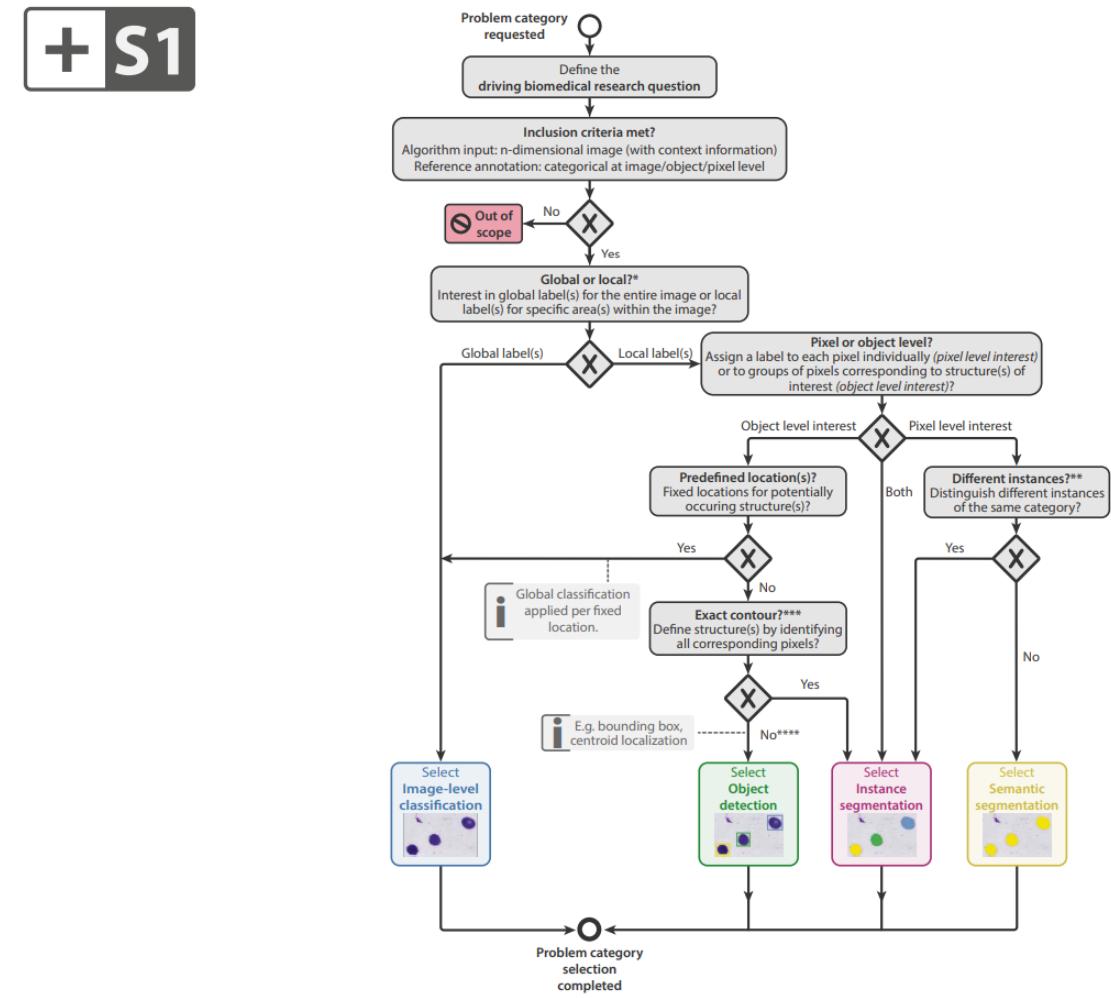
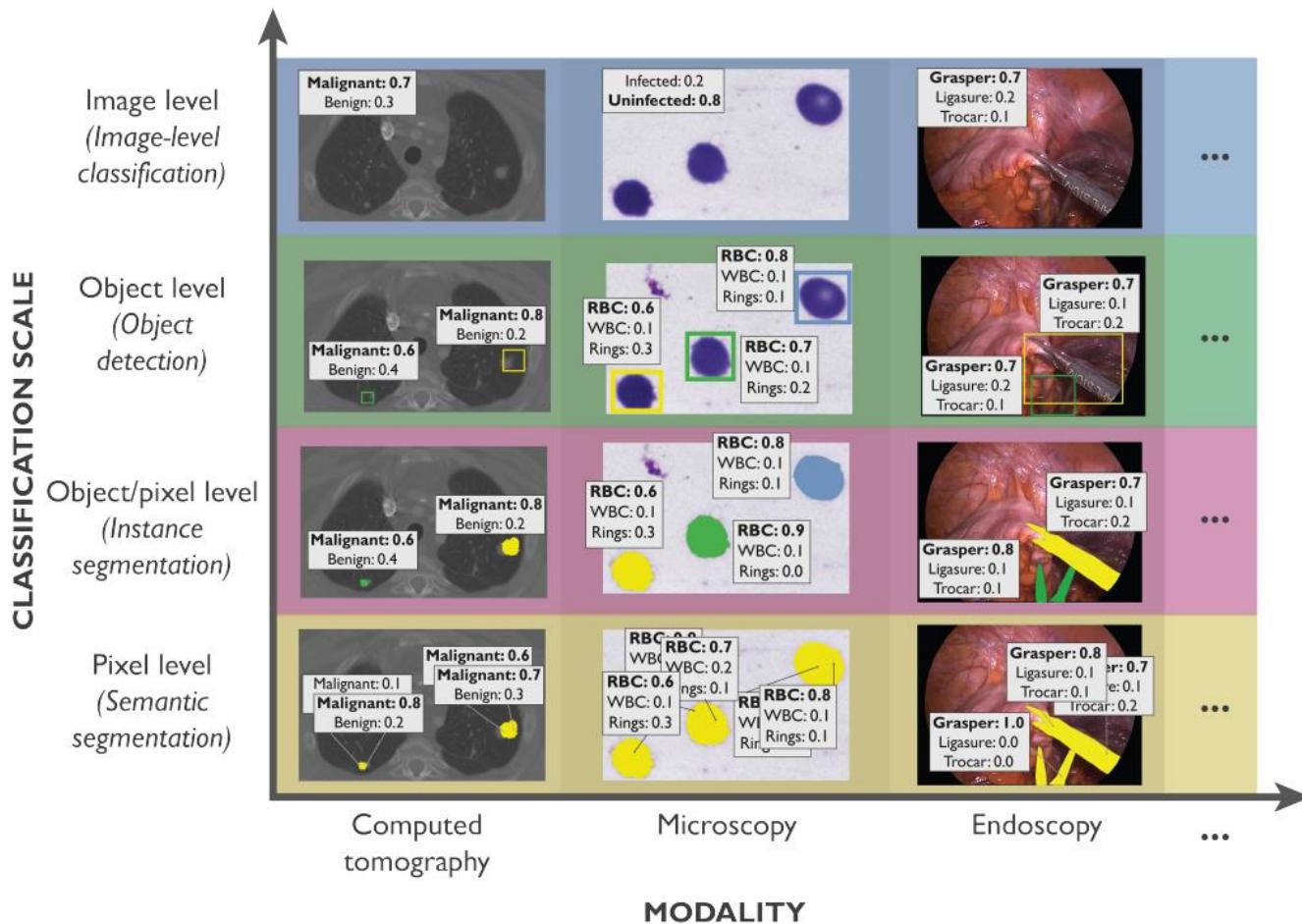
$$e_{Class} = \frac{H}{|TP| + |FN|}$$

- Hamming distance

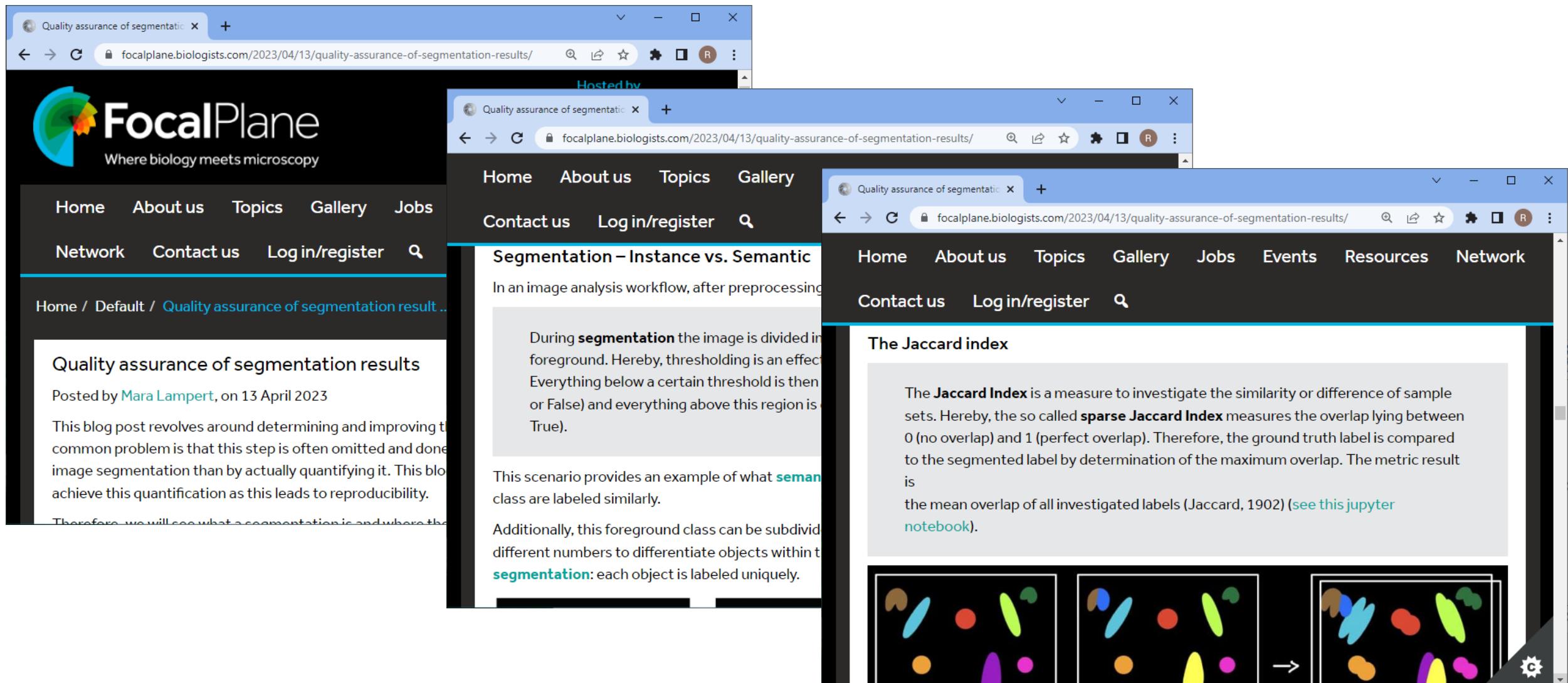
$$d_h = |A \cup B| - |A \cap B| = |FP| + |FN|$$

# What metric to use when?

- “Metrics reloaded: Pitfalls and recommendations for image analysis validation”  
Maier-Hein, Reinke et al. <https://arxiv.org/abs/2206.01653>



# Further reading



The image shows three separate browser windows side-by-side, all displaying the same web page from the FocalPlane website. The URL in the address bar is [focalplane.biologists.com/2023/04/13/quality-assurance-of-segmentation-results/](https://focalplane.biologists.com/2023/04/13/quality-assurance-of-segmentation-results/).

**Left Window:** The main content area displays a section titled "Quality assurance of segmentation results". It includes a bio image of a cell with various organelles. Below the image, there is a detailed text explanation of segmentation, mentioning foreground and background classes, thresholding, and the Jaccard index. A sidebar on the right contains a "Segmentation – Instance vs. Semantic" section with a figure showing three panels of segmented images.

**Middle Window:** This window is a "Hosted by" version of the same page. It has a different header with "Topics" and "Gallery" instead of "Network". The content is identical to the left window.

**Right Window:** This window shows the full header with "Topics", "Gallery", "Jobs", "Events", "Resources", and "Network". The content is also identical to the others.

<https://focalplane.biologists.com/2023/04/13/quality-assurance-of-segmentation-results/>

# Image segmentation in Napari

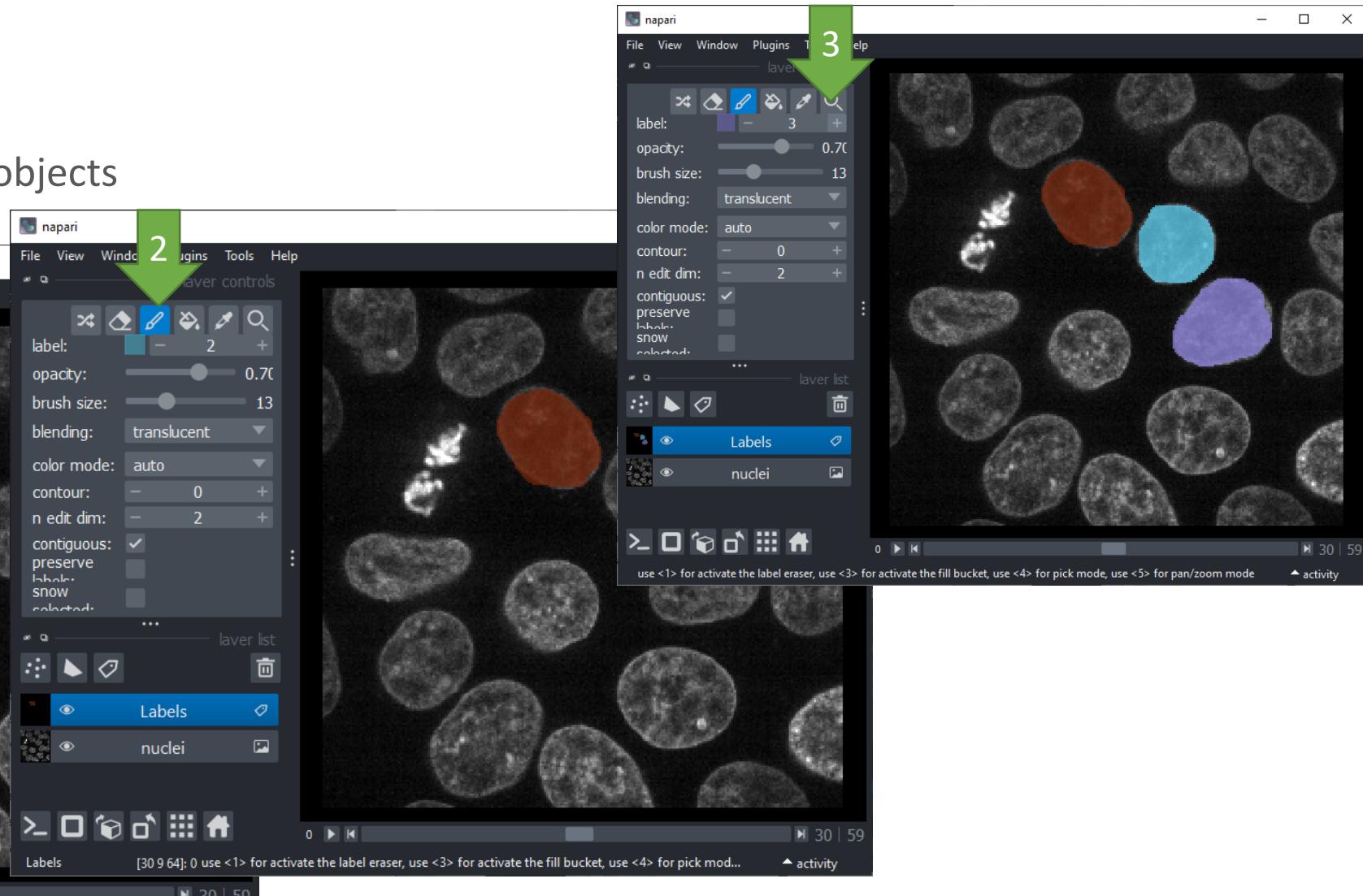
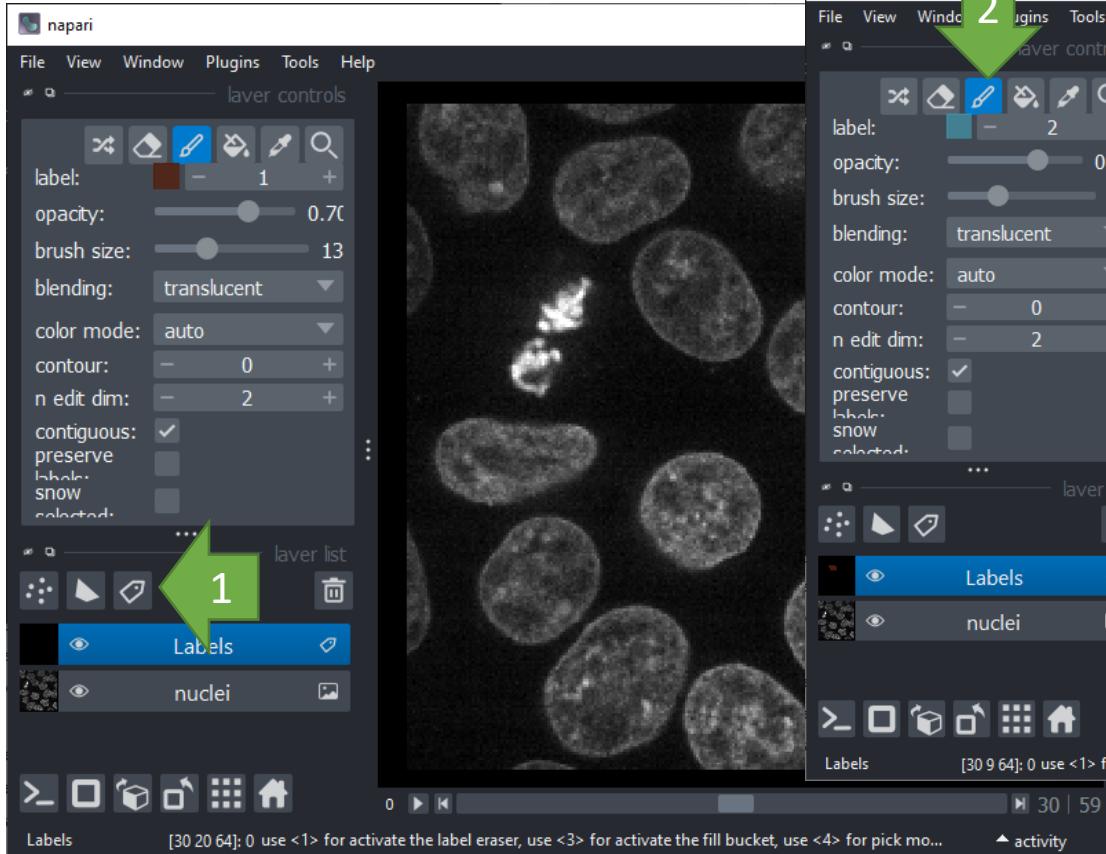
Robert Haase

Using materials from  
Ryan Savill George, MPI CBG Dresden

April 2023

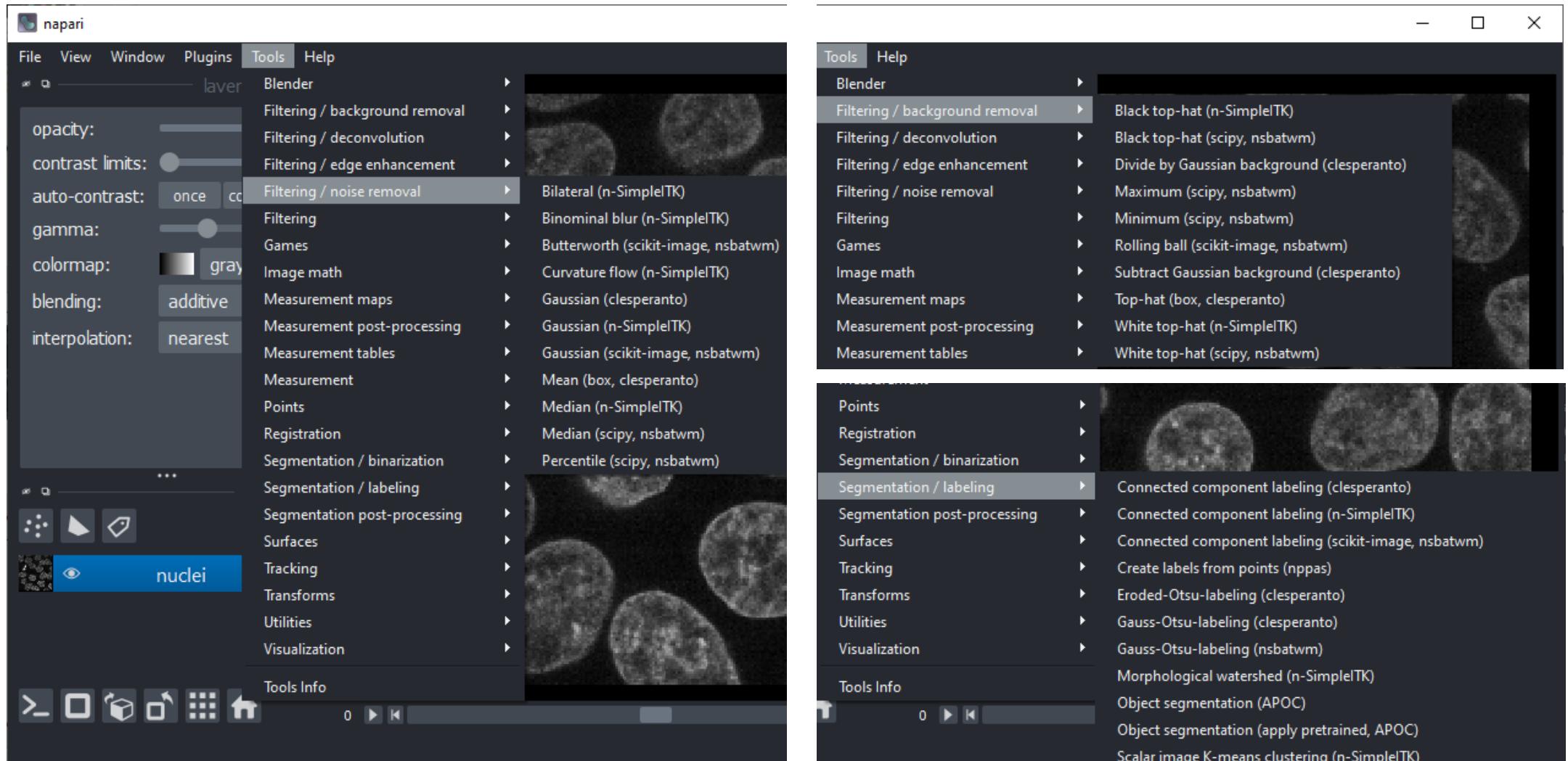
# Manual annotation

1. Create a labels layer
2. Annotate first object
3. Increase label, annotate more objects



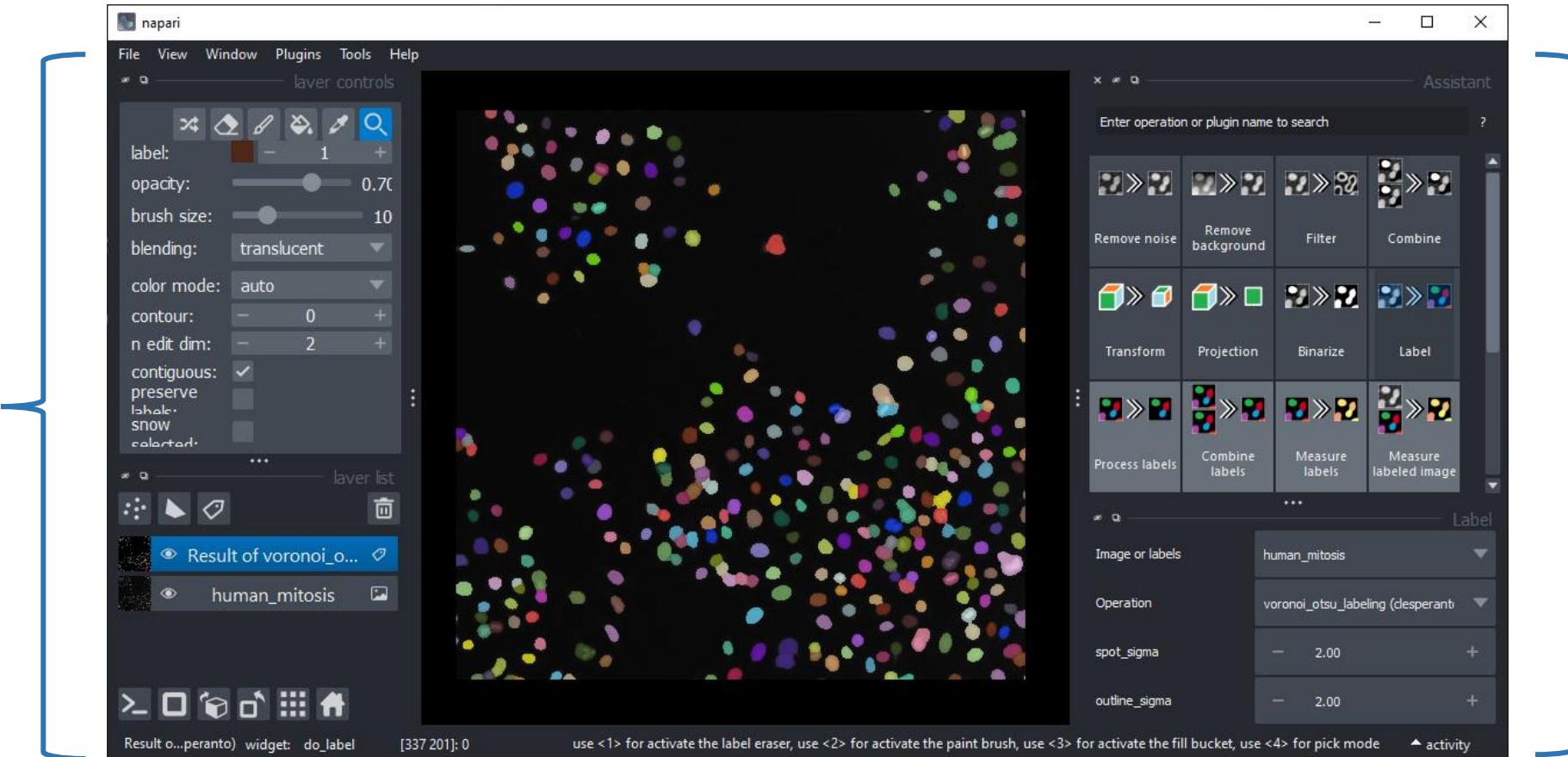
# The Tools menu

- Organized in categories similar to what you learned last week



# The Napari Assistant

- Tools > Utilities > Assistant (na)

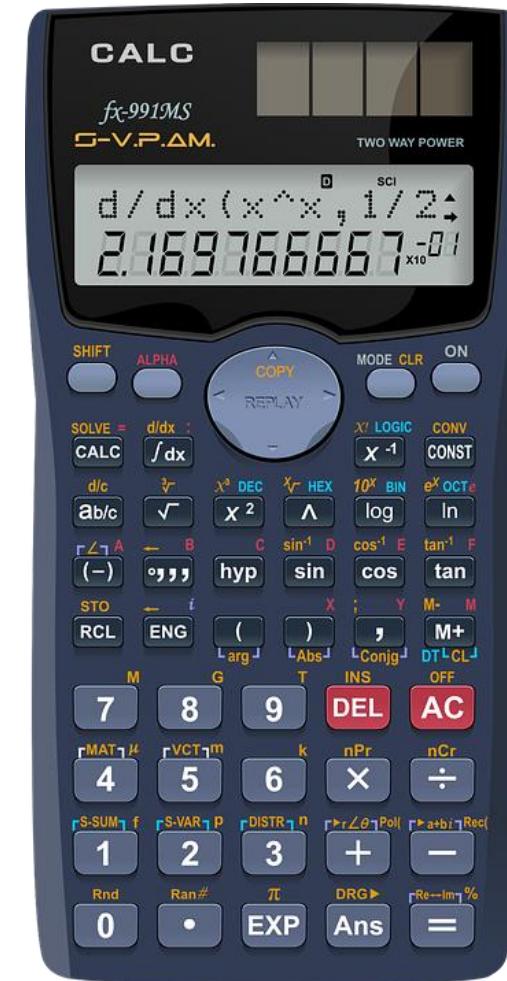
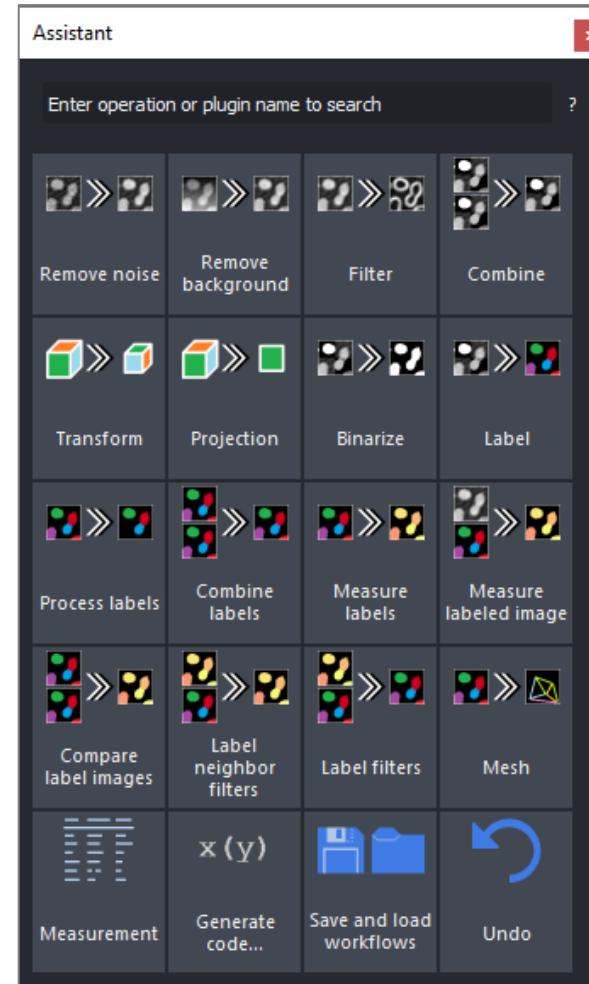


Viewer  
controls

Image  
Processing

# The Napari Assistant

- A pocket-calculator-like interface to build image analysis workflows



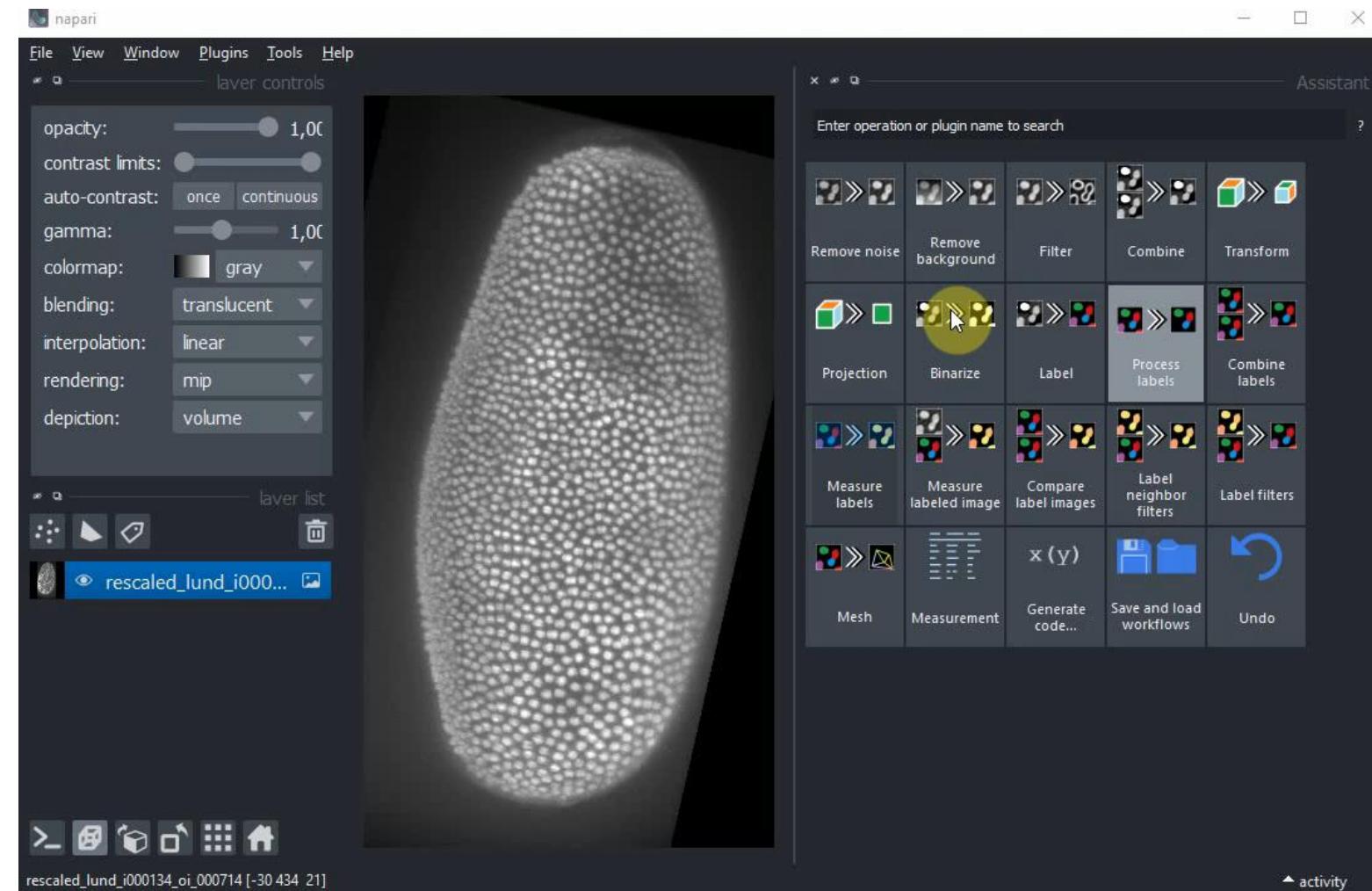
# The Napari Assistant

- Classical image processing operations + advanced tools
- Saving&loading supported
- Undo [redo]
- Hints for next steps
- ...

Big thanks to:

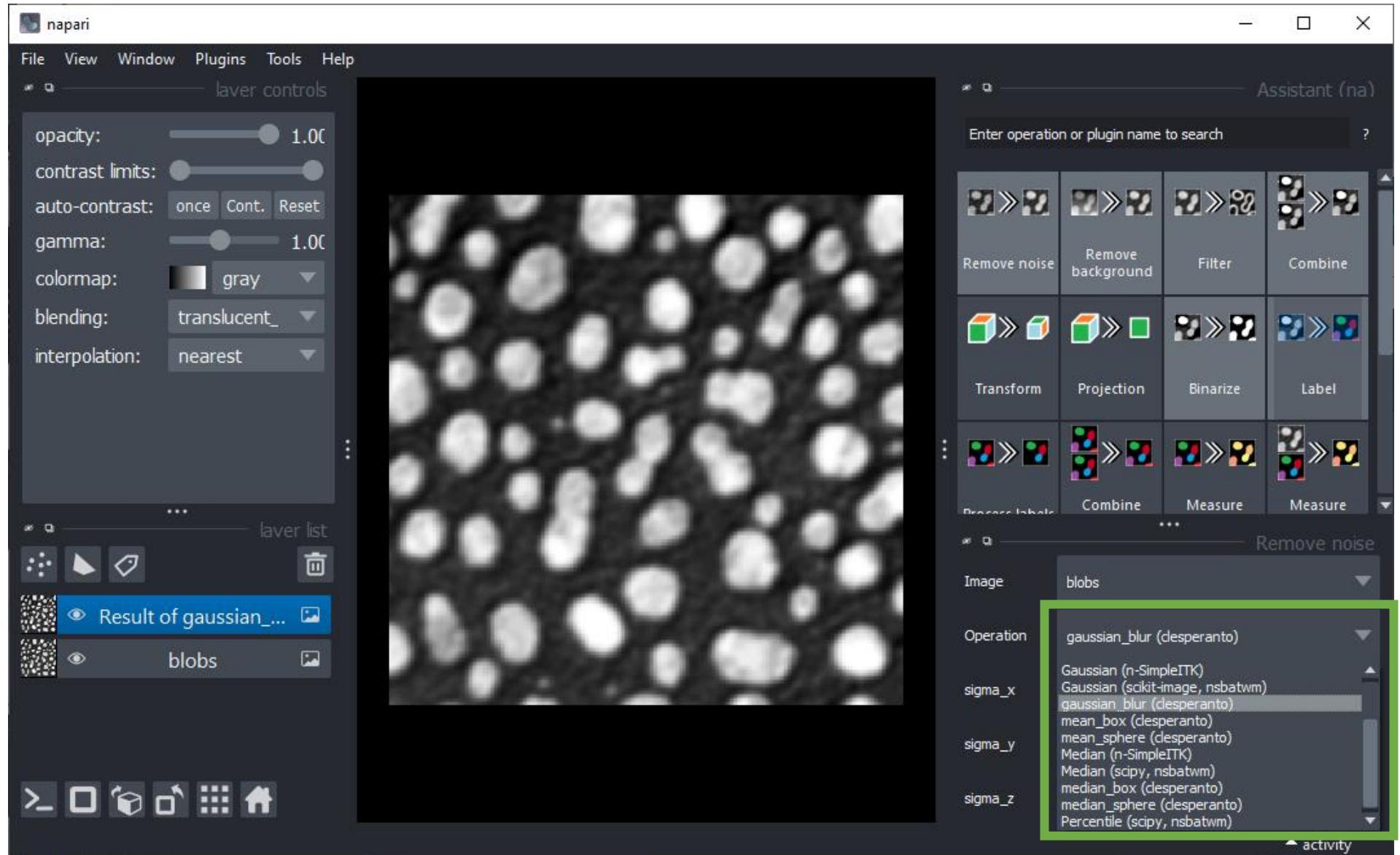


Ryan Savill  
@RyanSavill4



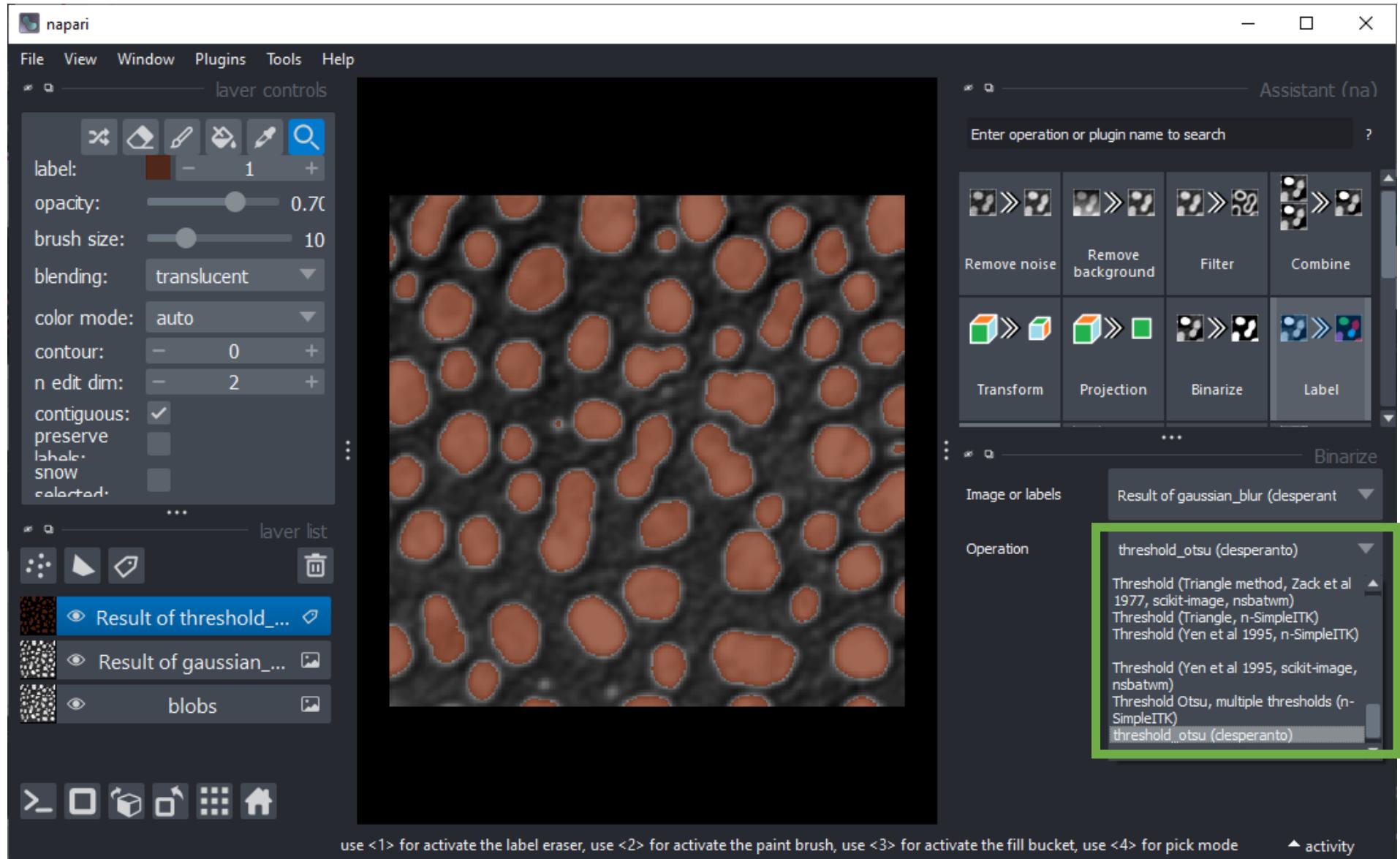
# Workflow building

- Try different algorithms, e.g. for removing noise
- Find them in the pulldown



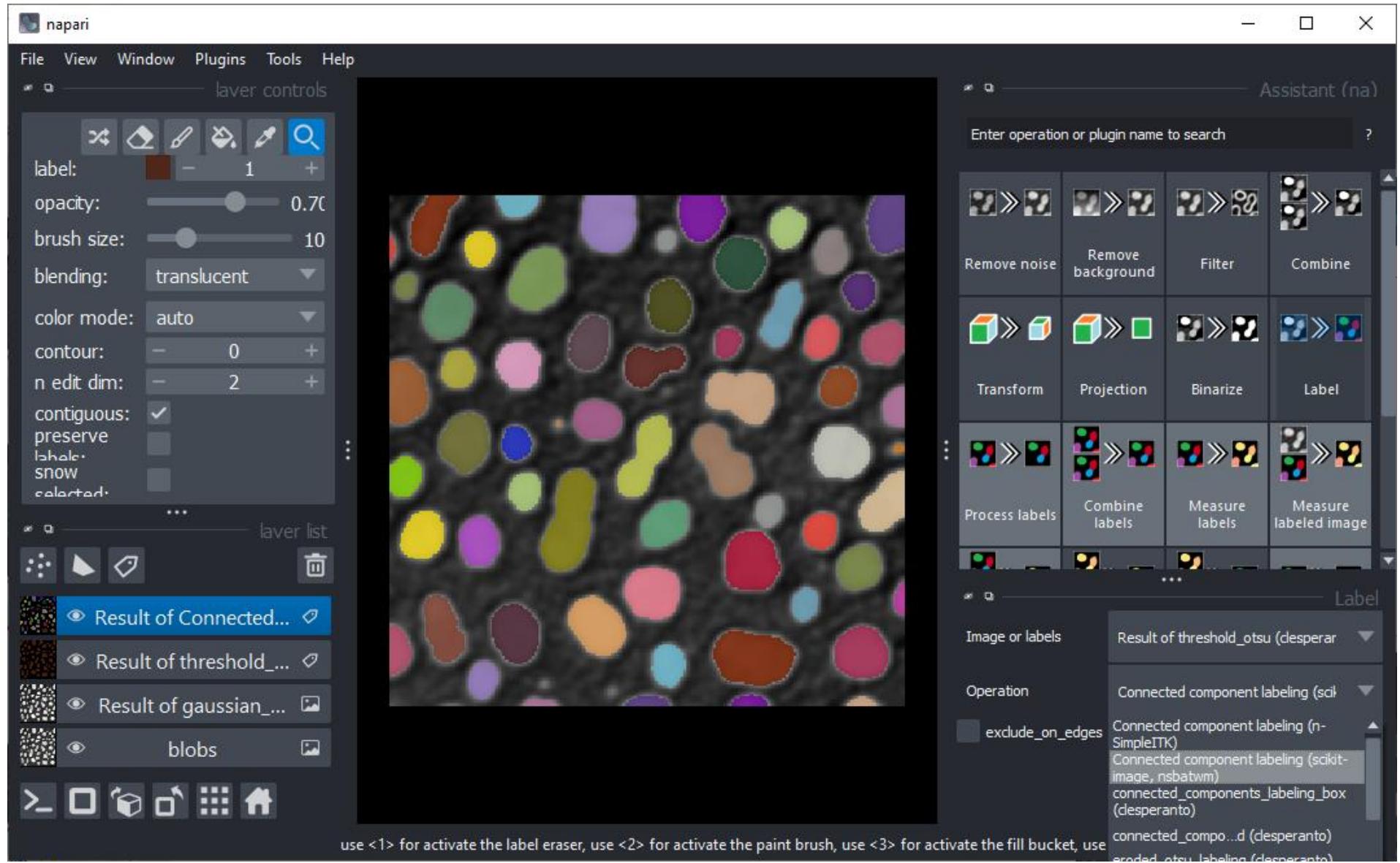
# Workflow building

- Try different binarization algorithms



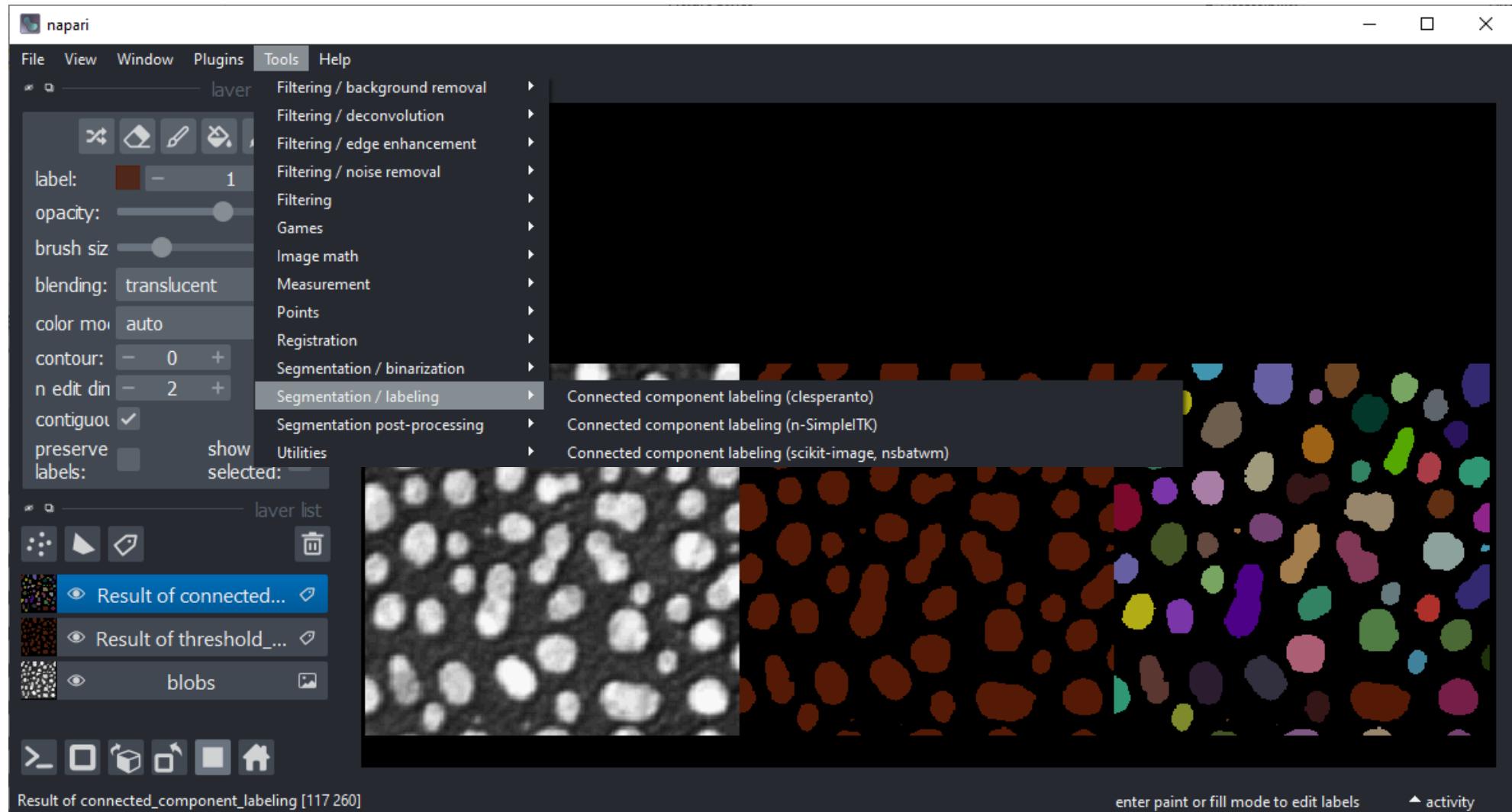
# Workflow building

- Try different labeling algorithms



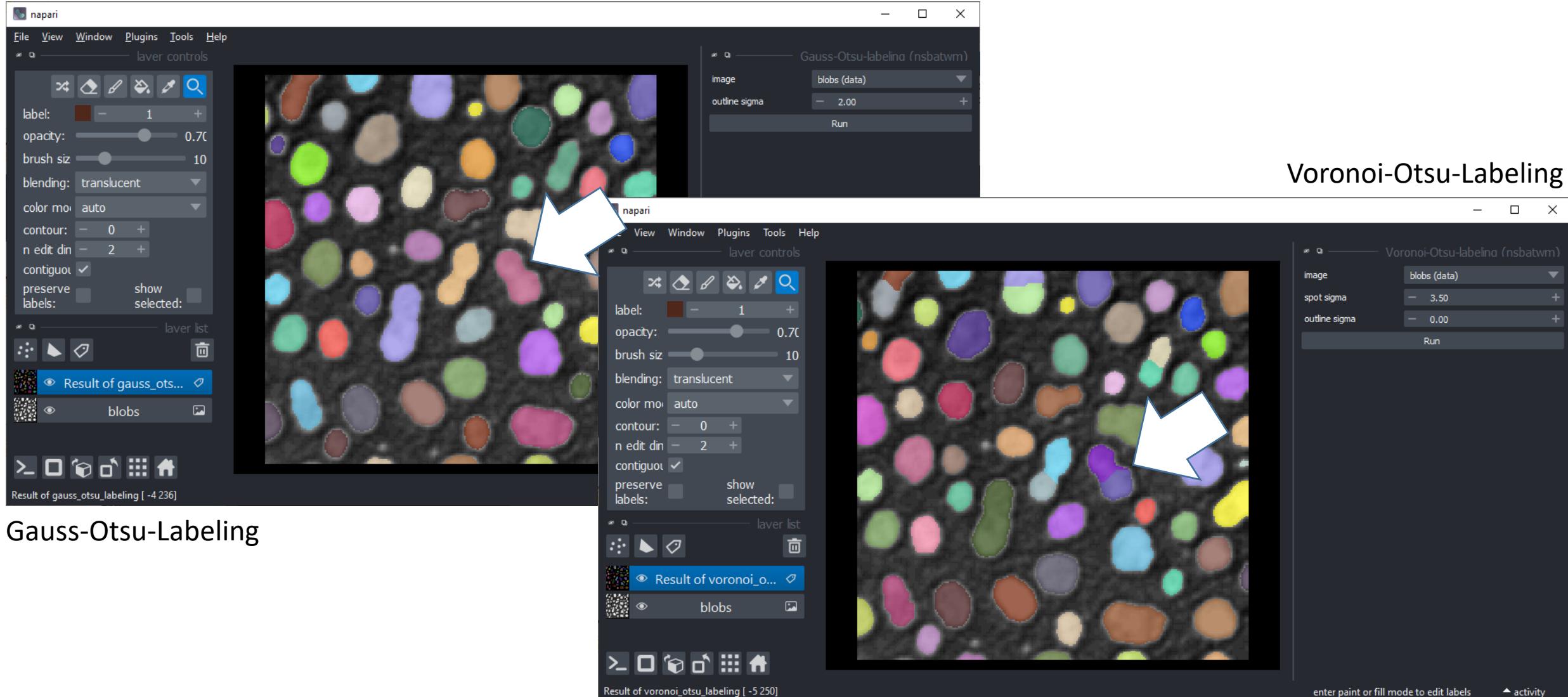
# Workflow building

Also check out the Tools > Segmentation / labeling menu

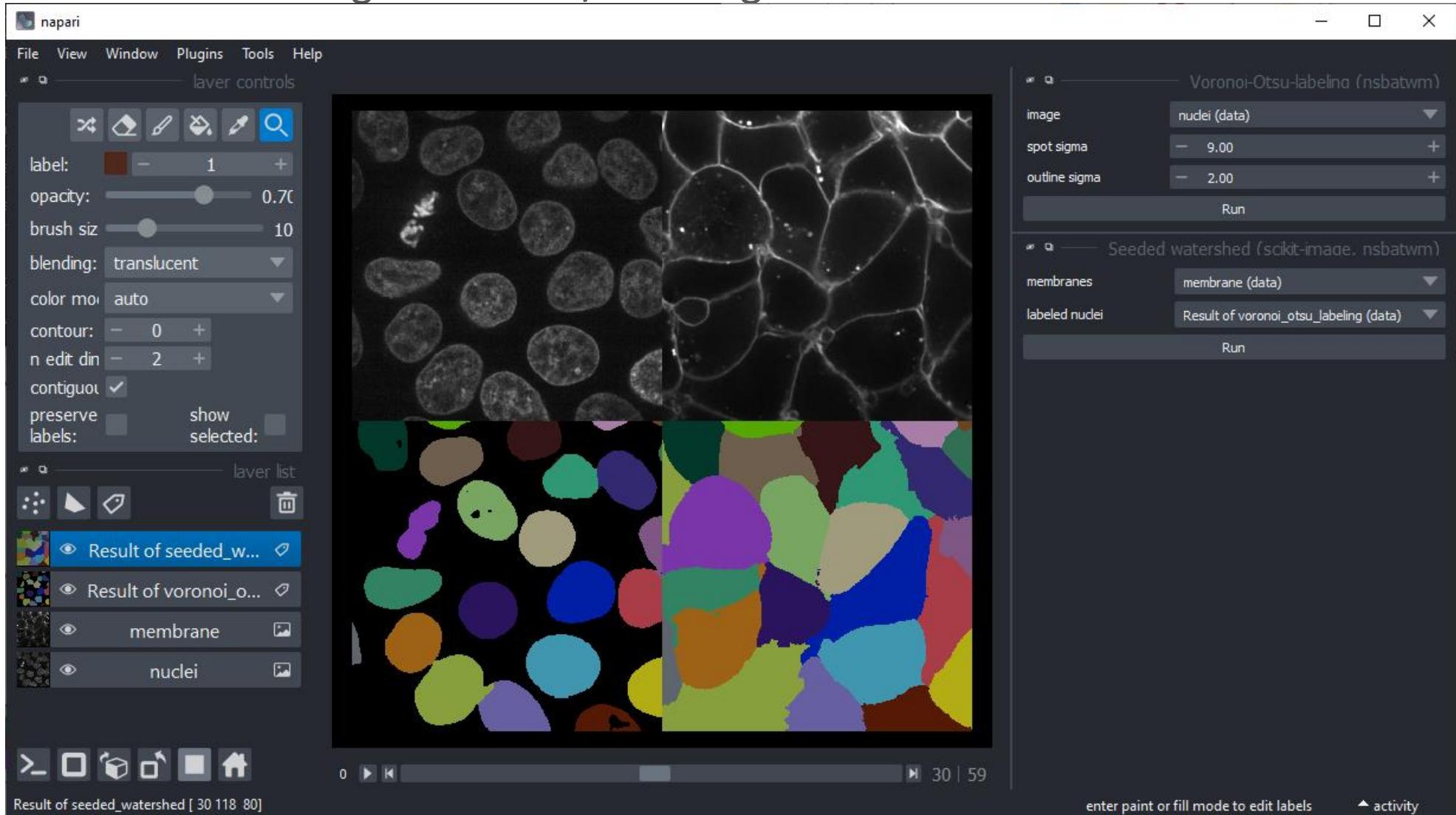


# Short-cuts: Voronoi-Otsu-Labeling

Also check out the Tools > Segmentation / labeling menu



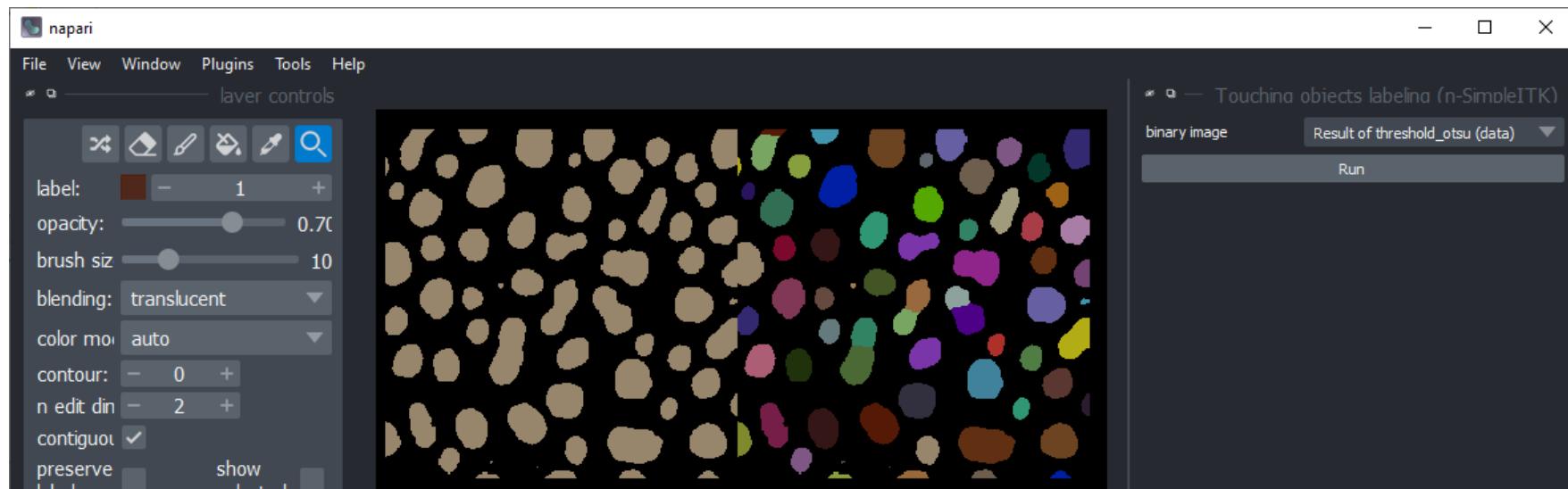
Also check out the Tools > Segmentation / labeling menu



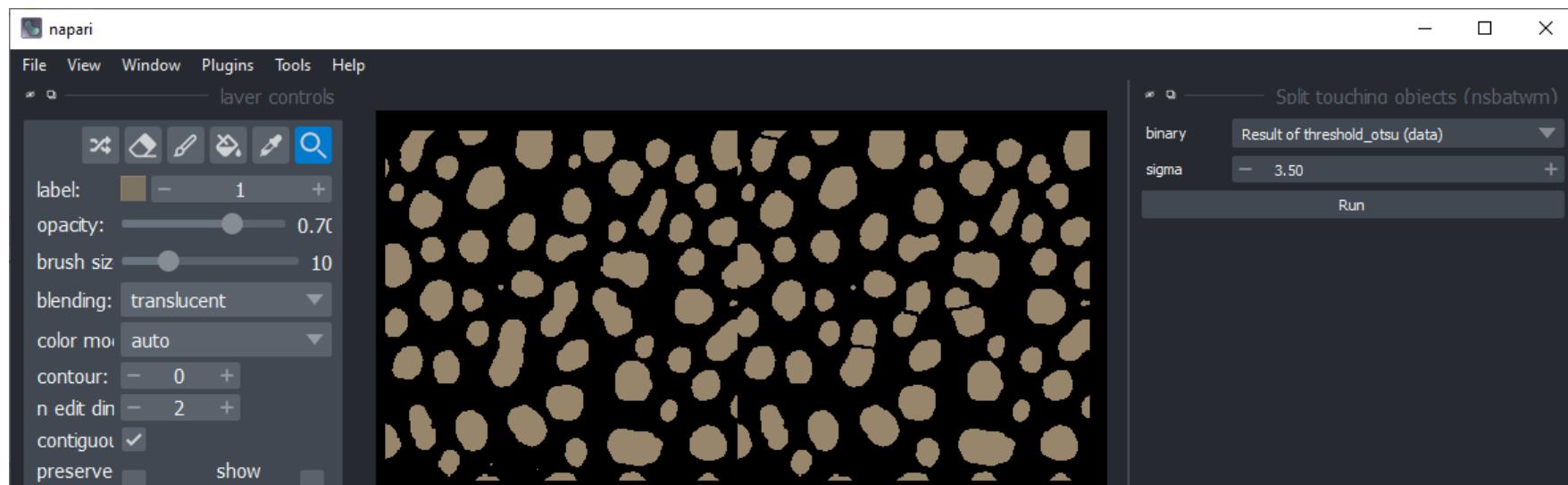
# Watershed

- From binary images

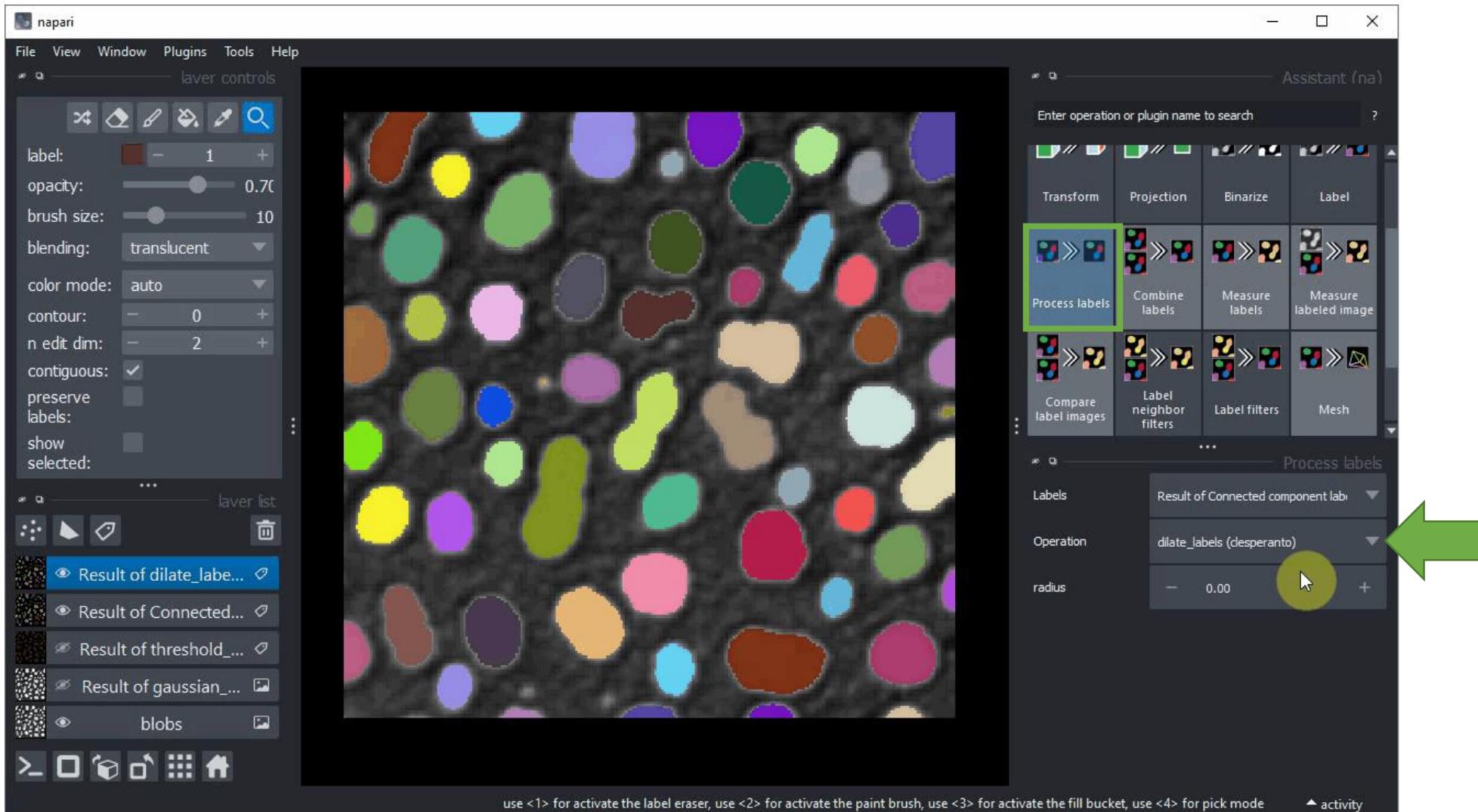
Tools > Segmentation / labeling >  
Label touching objects



Tools > Segmentation post-  
processing >  
Split touching objects  
(Similar to ImageJ's Watershed)

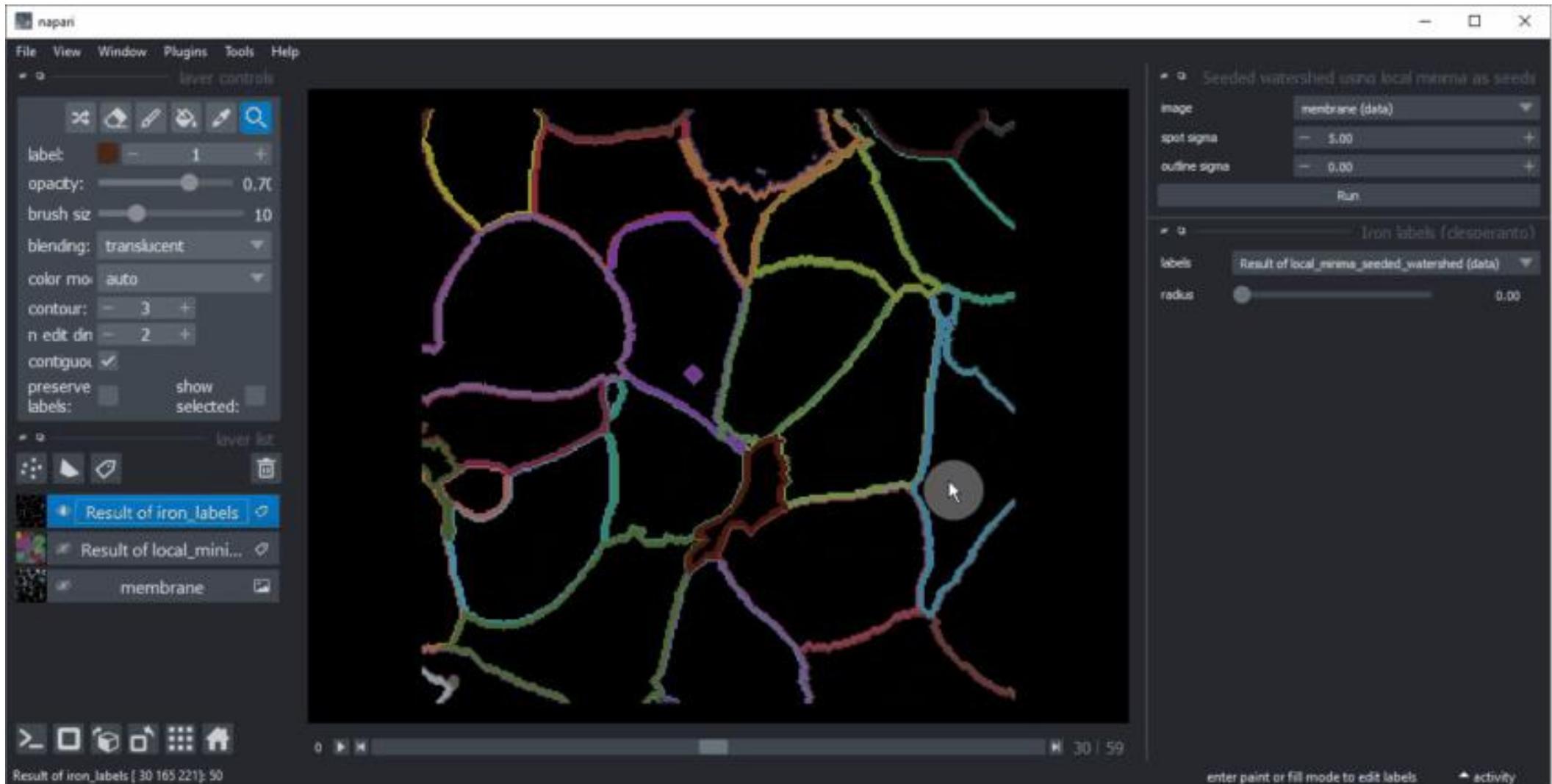


- In Napari Assistant: Process labels



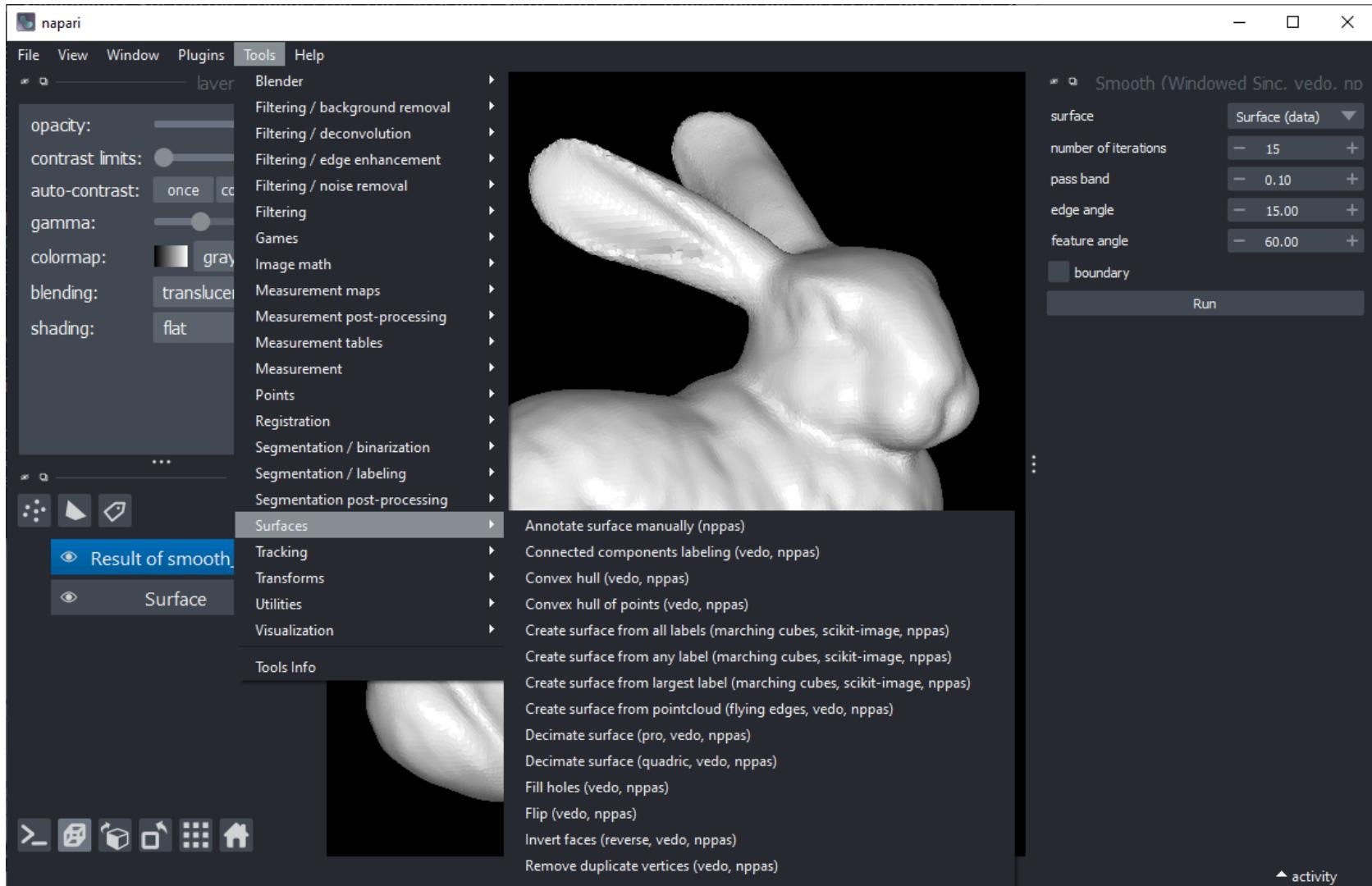
# Label post-processing / morphological operations

- In Napari menu Tools > Segmentation post-processing > Smooth labels (clEsperanto)



# Surface reconstruction / Processing

- Tools > Surfaces > Create surface ...

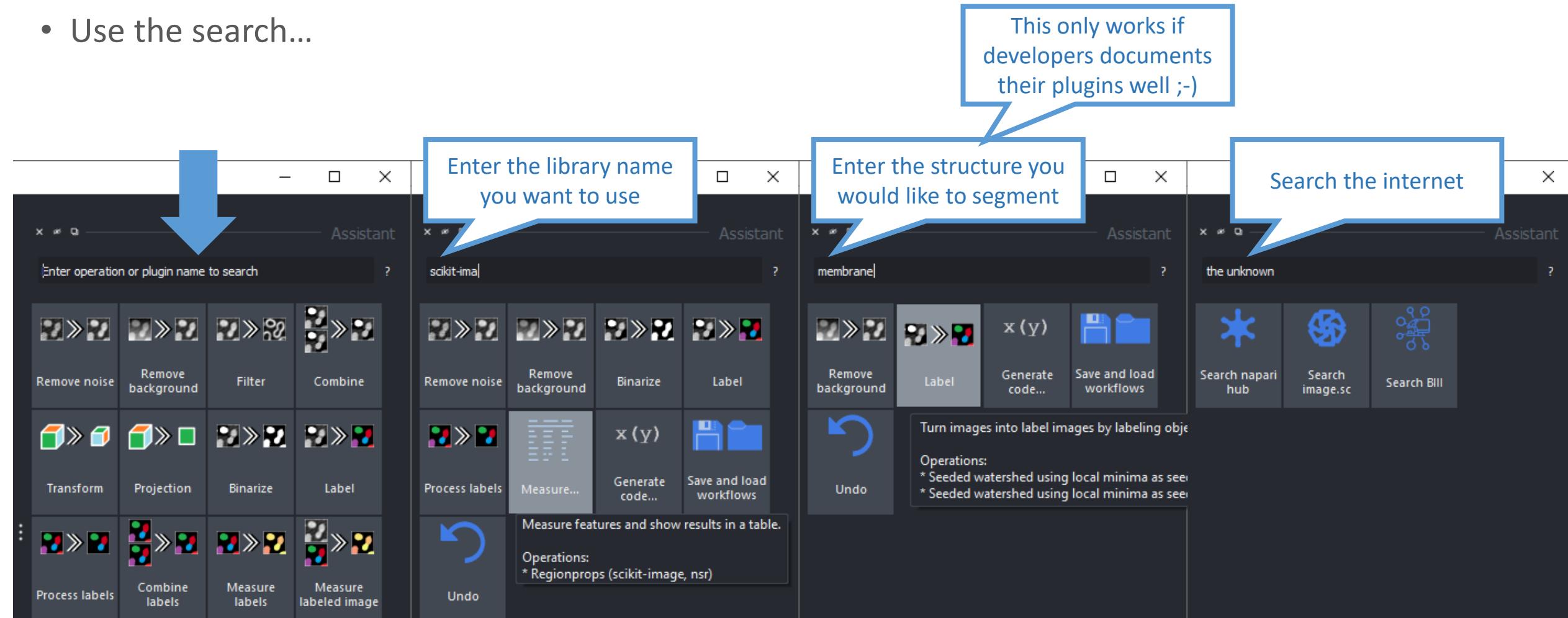


You need to install an extra napari-plugin:

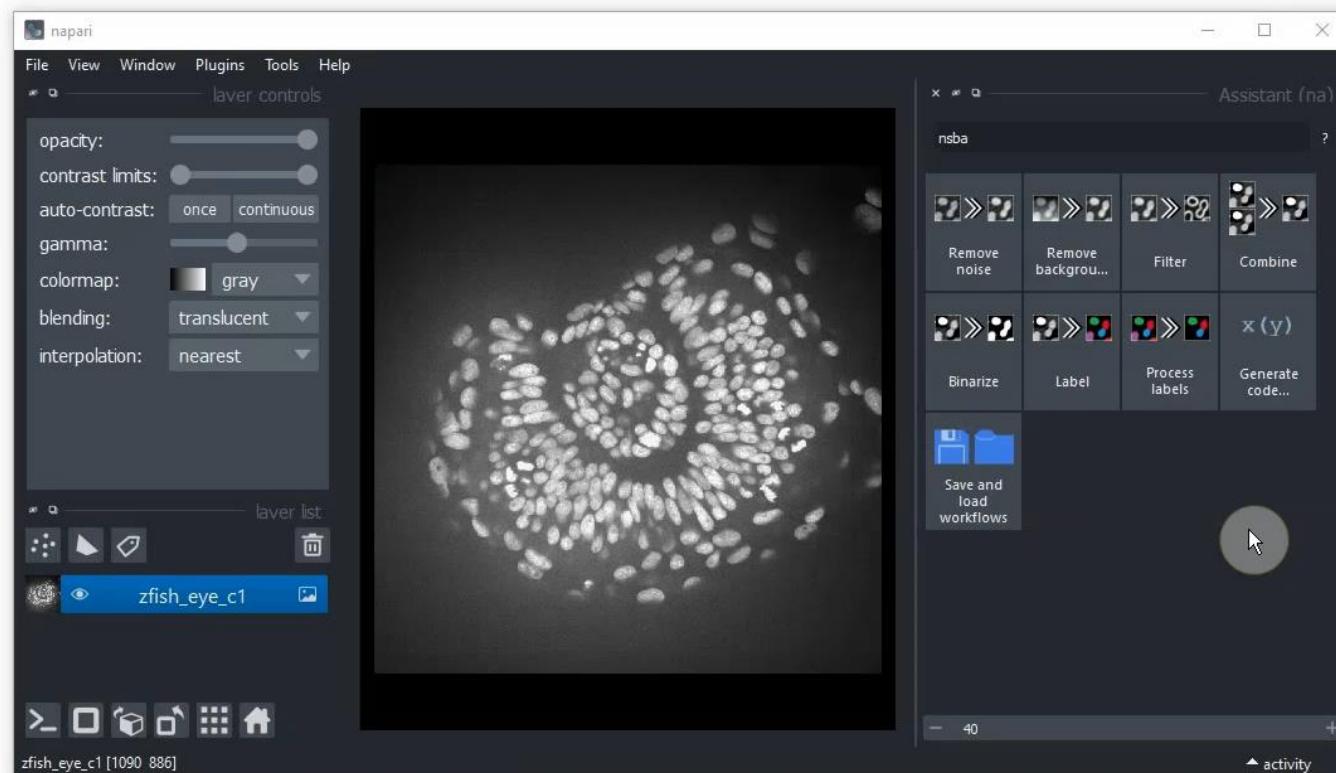
<https://github.com/haesleinhuepf/napari-process-points-and-surfaces>

# Browse operations

- Use the search...



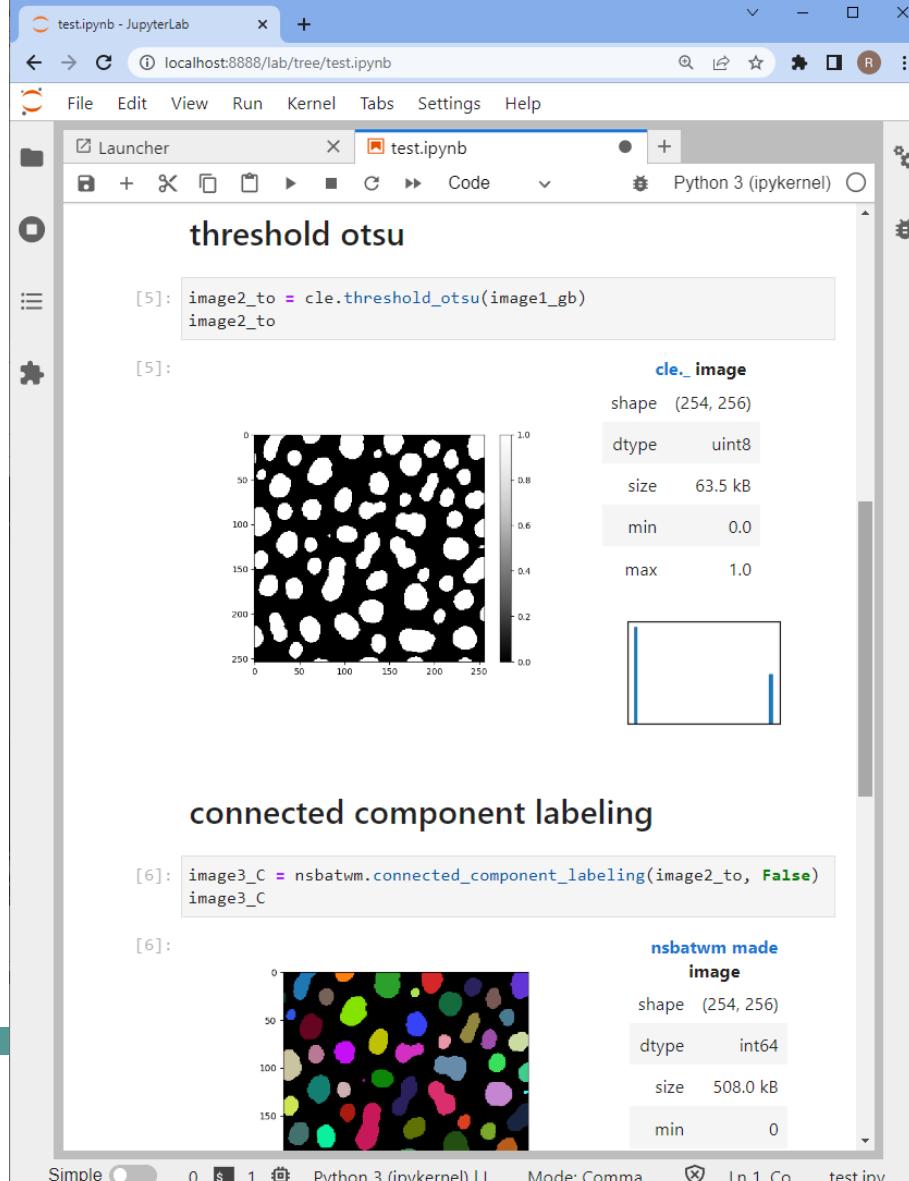
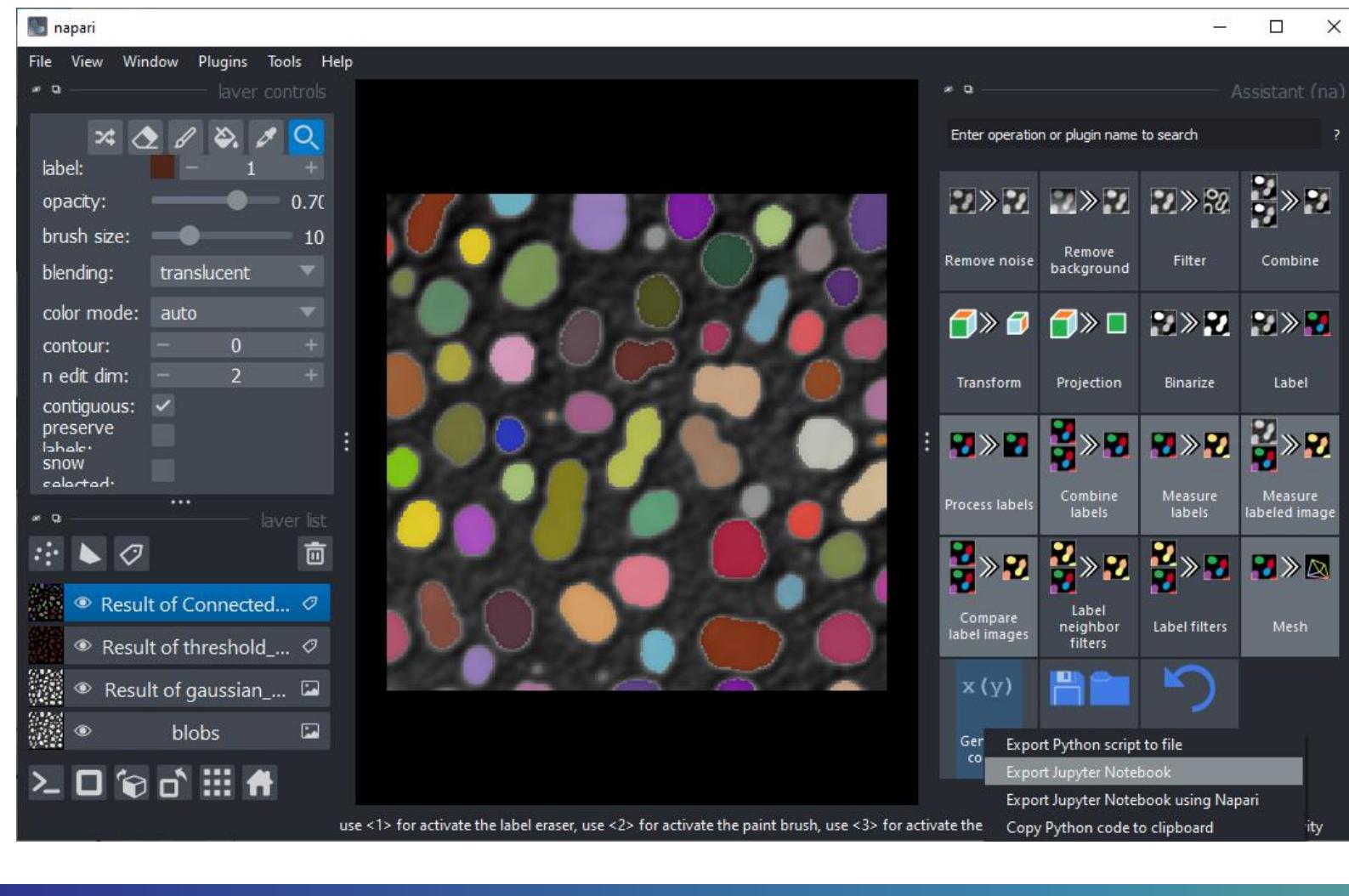
# Export code to Jupyter Notebooks



<https://github.com/haesleinhuepf/napari-assistant>

Image data source: Mauricio Rocha Martins, Norden lab, MPI CBG (now at IGC Oeiras)

# Export code to Jupyter Notebooks



The screenshot shows a Jupyter Notebook titled 'test.ipynb - JupyterLab'. The code cell [5] contains the command `image2_to = cle.threshold_otsu(image1_gb)`. Below it, the variable `cle._image` is displayed with its properties: shape (254, 256), dtype uint8, size 63.5 kB, min 0.0, and max 1.0. The output cell [5] shows a binary mask image where white blobs are on a black background. The code cell [6] contains `image3_C = nsbatwm.connected_component_labeling(image2_to, False)`. The output cell [6] shows the original segmented image from the napari screenshot. Below the notebook, the variable `nsbatwm.made_image` is shown with its properties: shape (254, 256), dtype int64, size 508.0 kB, and min 0.

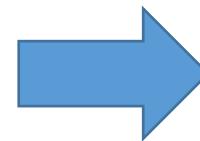
# Image segmentation in Python

Robert Haase

April 2023

# Voronoi-Otsu-Labeling

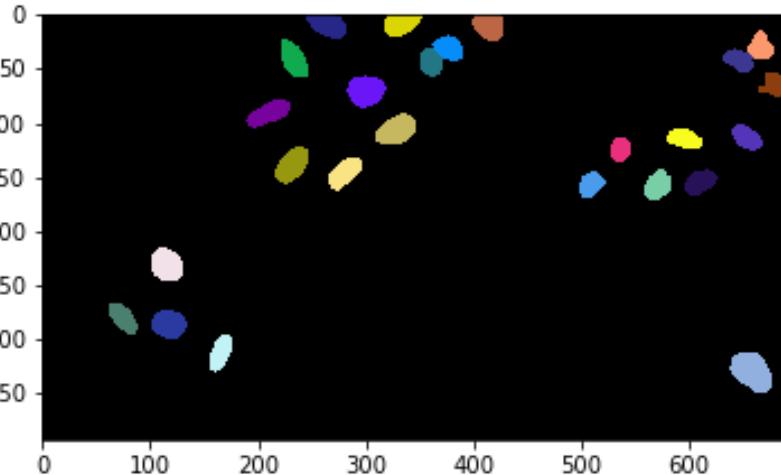
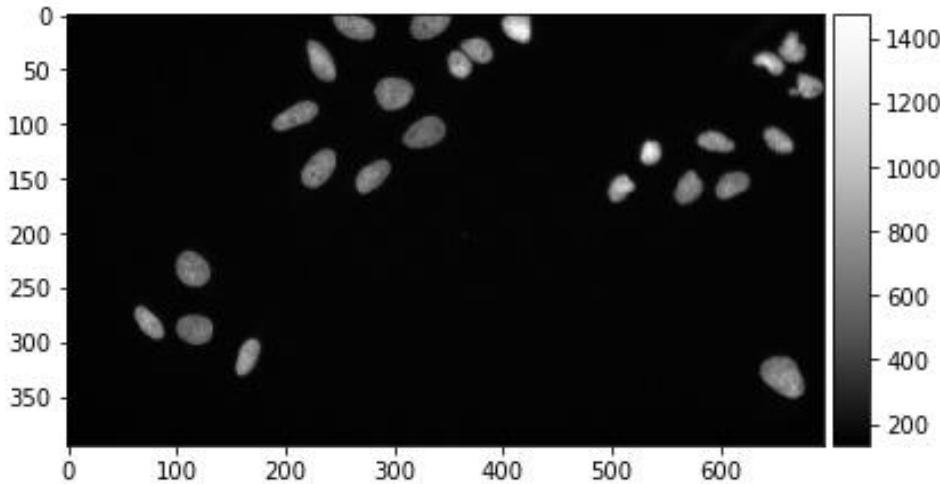
- Gaussian-Blur
- Otsu-Thresholding
- Spot-detection
- Watershed on the binary image



... in a single line of code:

```
segmented = nsbatwm.voronoi_otsu_labeling(input_image,  
                                             spot_sigma=5,  
                                             outline_sigma=1  
)
```

segmented



**nsbatwm made image**

shape	(395, 695)
dtype	int32
size	1.0 MB
min	0
max	25

- Some [segmentation] algorithms have prerequisites...

```
[1]: import pyclesperanto_prototype as cle
```

```
[ ]: cle.voronoi_otsu_labeling(
```

**Docstring:**

Labels objects directly from grey-value images.

The two sigma parameters allow tuning the segmentation result. Under the hood, this filter applies two Gaussian blurs, spot detection, Otsu-thresholding [2] and Voronoi-labeling [3]. The thresholded binary image is flooded using the Voronoi tessellation approach starting from the found local maxima.

**Notes**

-----

\* This operation assumes input images are isotropic.

**Parameters**

-----

source : Image

    Input grey-value image

label\_image\_destination : Image, optional

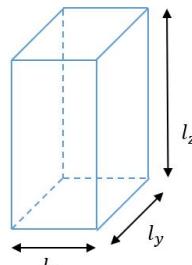
    Output image

spot\_sigma : float, optional

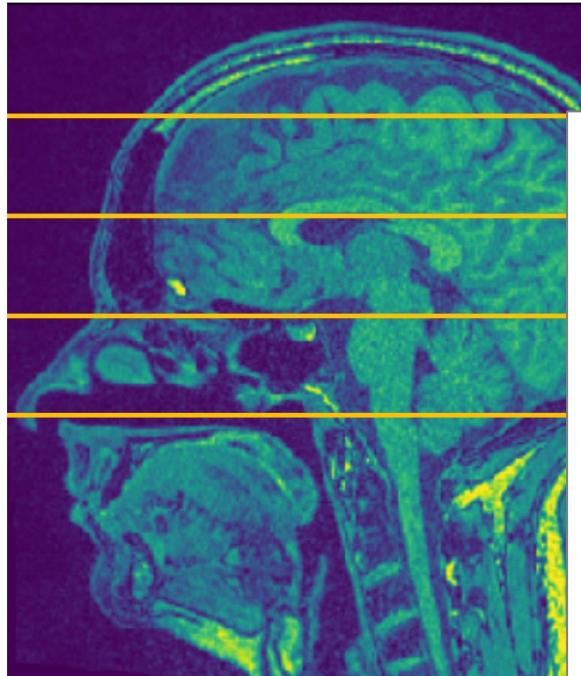
- Reminder: Anisotropic images might be tricky to process properly

## Image stacks and voxels

- 3-dimensional images consisting of voxels
- "Image stack"
- Often anisotropic (not equally large in all directions)



$$l_x = l_y \neq l_z$$

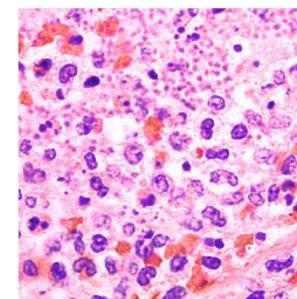


 @haesleinhuepf 



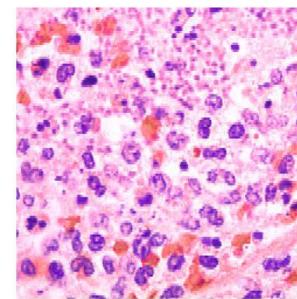
## Anisotropy

- Voxel size has immediate impact on image quality and thus, on processing / analysis results.



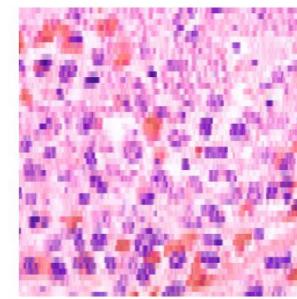
1:1

250 x 250 px



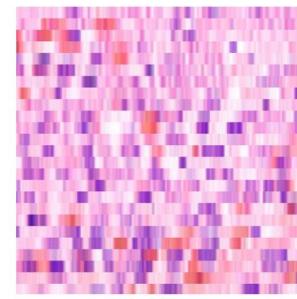
1:2

250 x 125 px



1:5

250 x 50 px



1:10

250 x 25 px

 @haesleinhuepf

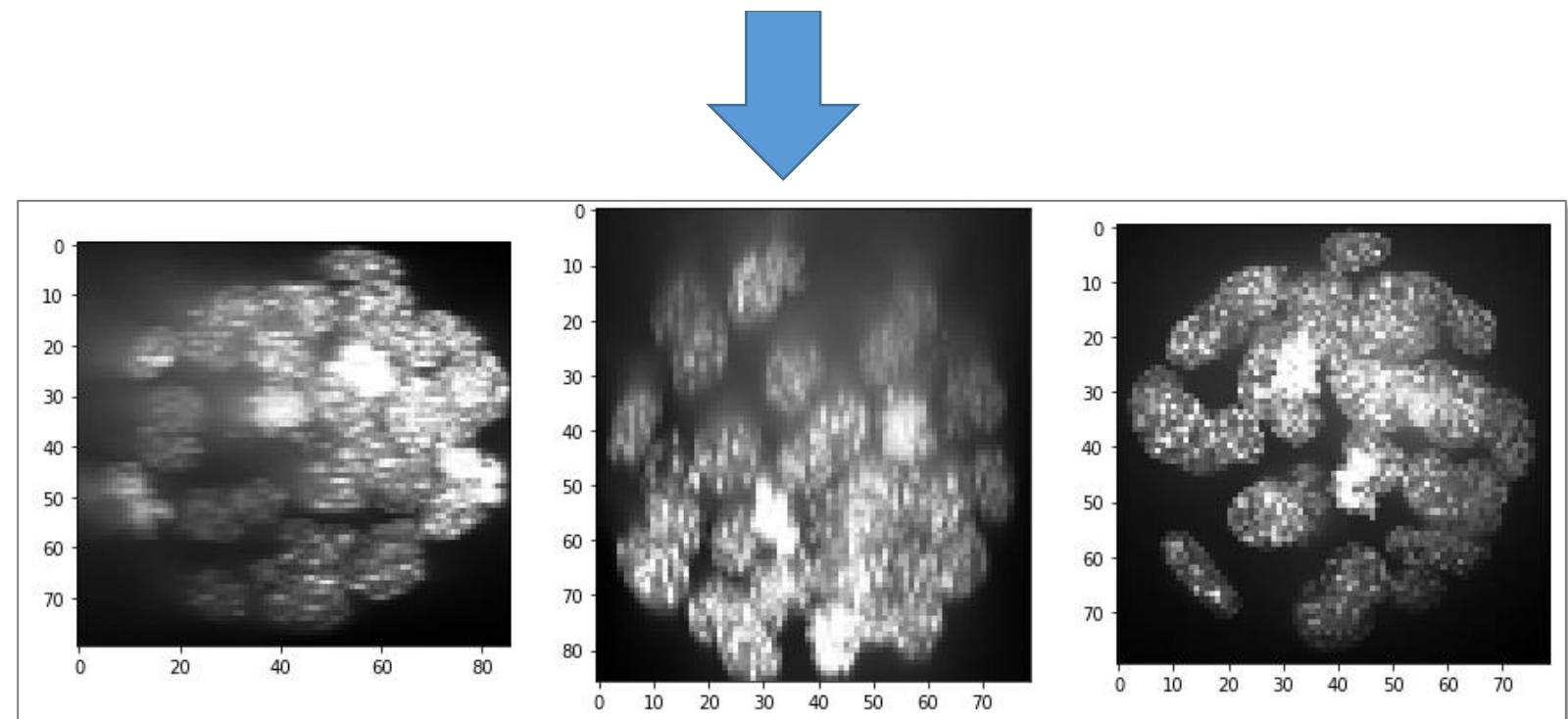
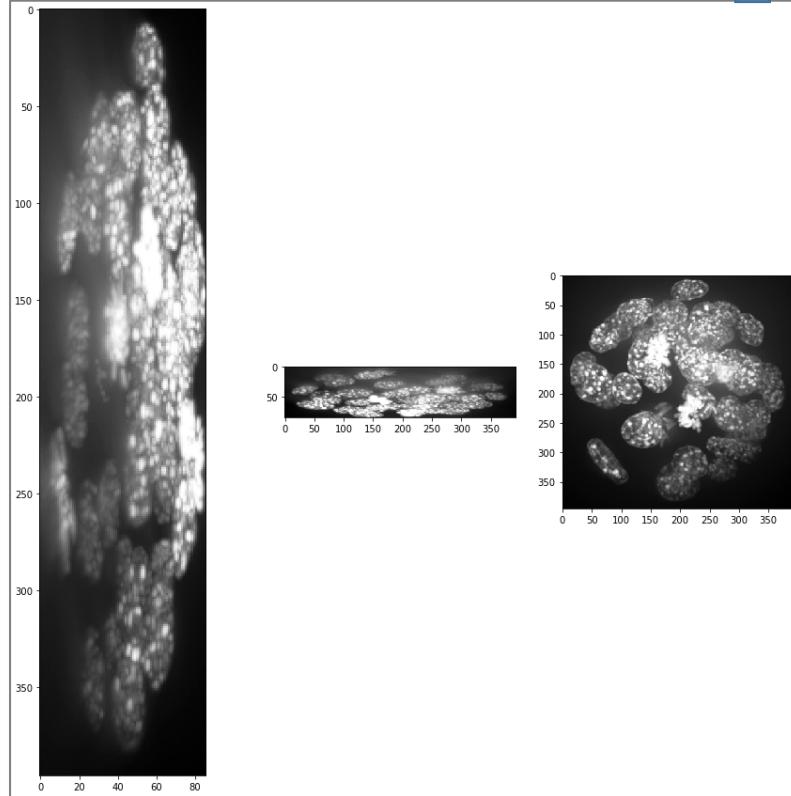
April 2023

Image source: cropped from  
[https://de.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Histo\\_Lungenpest.jpg](https://de.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Datei:Histo_Lungenpest.jpg)

# Reslicing / scaling / sampling

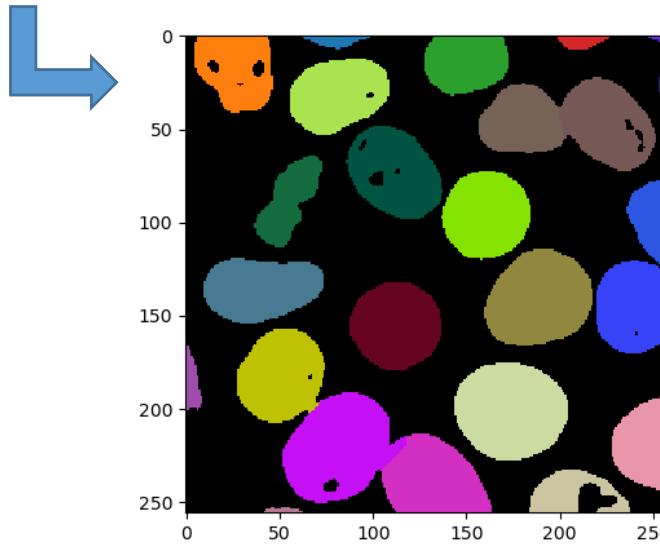
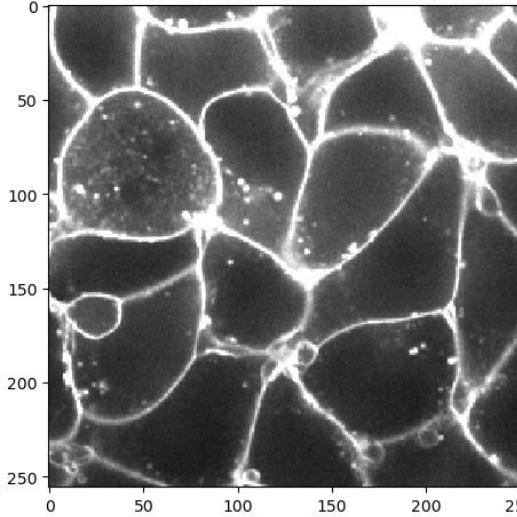
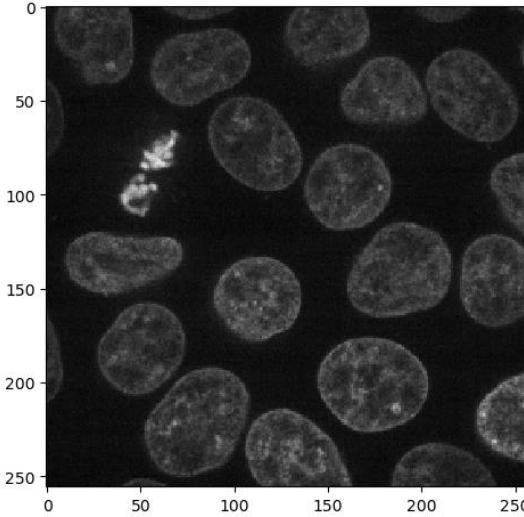
- Resample image data to a specific voxel size

```
resampled = cle.scale(input_image, factor_x=voxel_size_x, factor_y=voxel_size_y, factor_z=voxel_size_z, auto_size=True)  
show(resampled)
```

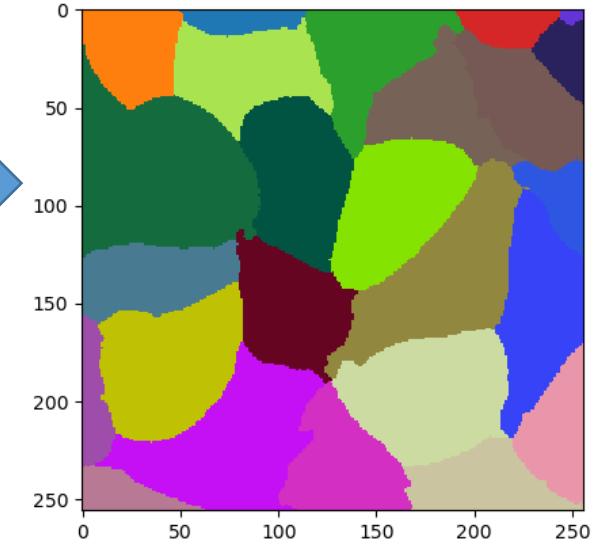


# Watershed

- ... in Python practice



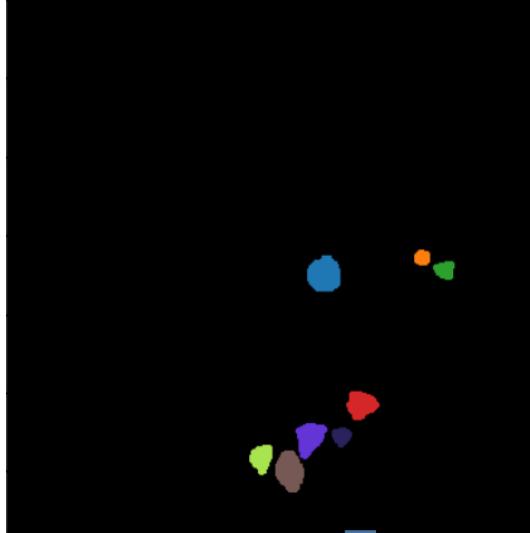
```
labeled_cells = seeded_watershed(membrane_channel, labeled_nuclei)  
labeled_cells
```



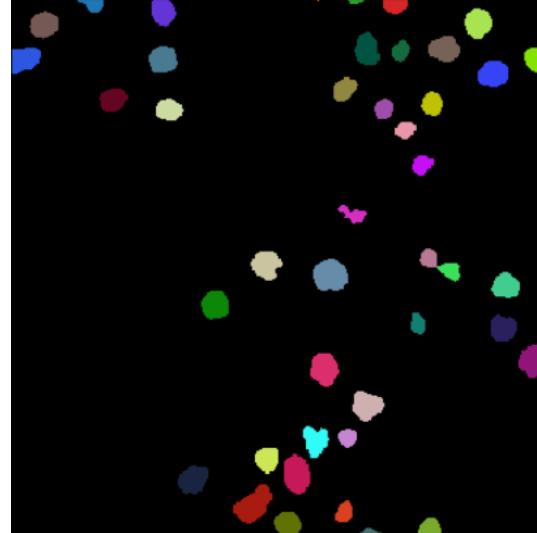
# Segmentation quality estimation

- Compare annotations with algorithm results

Sparse instance annotation



Instance segmentation



```
from the_segmentation_game import metrics
```

```
[10]: metrics.jaccard_index_sparse(annotation, labels)
```

```
[10]: 0.8357392602053431
```

<https://github.com/haesleinhuepf/the-segmentation-game#segmentation-algorithm-comparison>

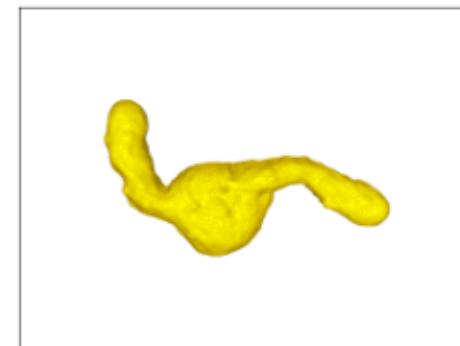
# Surface reconstruction

- Turn binary and/or label images into surface meshes



```
surface = nppas.all_labels_to_surface(binary_filled)
```

```
surface
```



**nppas.SurfaceTuple**

origin (z/y/x) [0. 0. 0.]

center of mass(z/y/x) 57.710,309.963,440.042

scale(z/y/x) 1.000,1.000,1.000

bounds (z/y/x) 12.500...113.500  
111.500...461.500  
169.500...807.500

average size 170.769

number of vertices 330776

number of faces 661548

# Surface mesh processing

- Surface mesh simplification
- To prevent the computer freezing

```
simplified_surface = nppas.decimate_quadric(surface, fraction=0.01)  
simplified_surface
```

**nppas.SurfaceTuple**

origin (z/y/x) [0. 0. 0.]

center of mass(z/y/x) 57.710,309.963,440.042

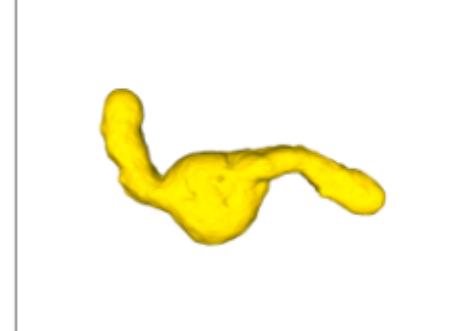
scale(z/y/x) 1.000,1.000,1.000

bounds (z/y/x)  
12.500...113.500  
111.500...461.500  
169.500...807.500

average size 170.769

number of vertices 330776

number of faces 661548



**nppas.SurfaceTuple**

origin (z/y/x) [0. 0. 0.]

center of mass(z/y/x) 57.928,308.938,440.985

scale(z/y/x) 1.000,1.000,1.000

bounds (z/y/x)  
13.231...113.510  
111.642...461.602  
170.022...806.468

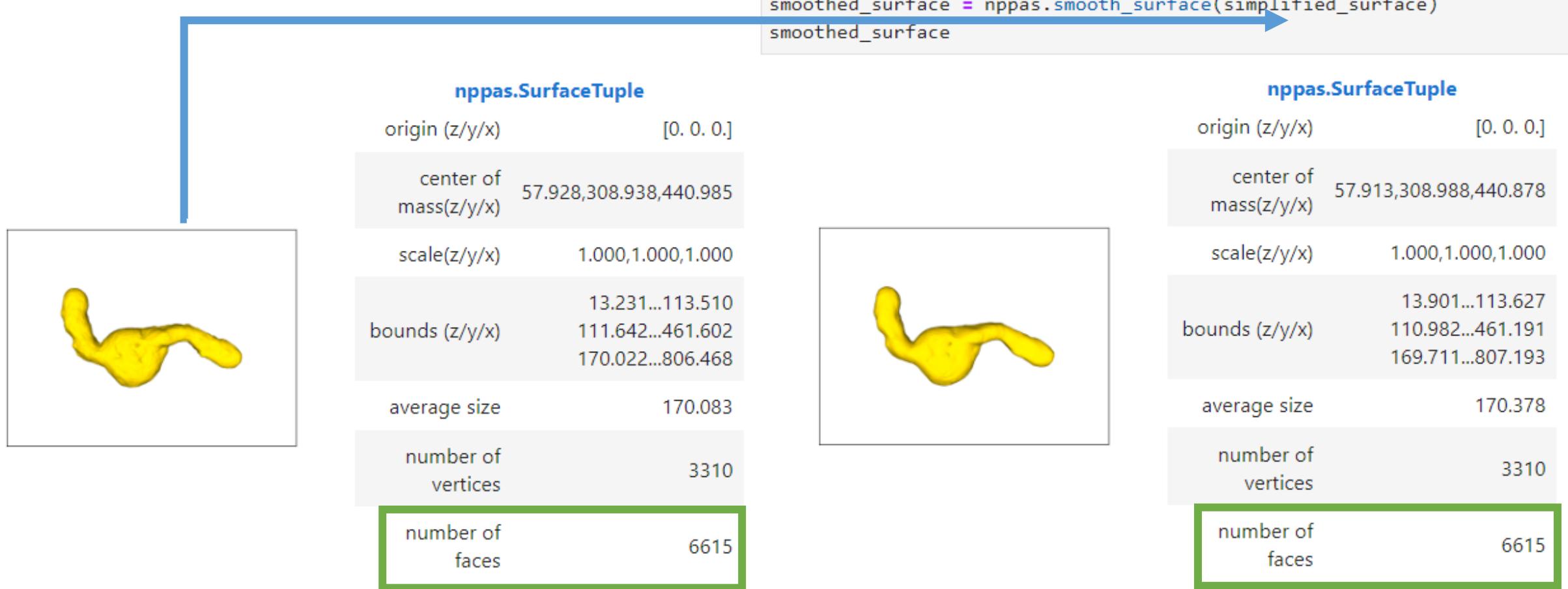
average size 170.083

number of vertices 3310

number of faces 6615

# Surface mesh processing

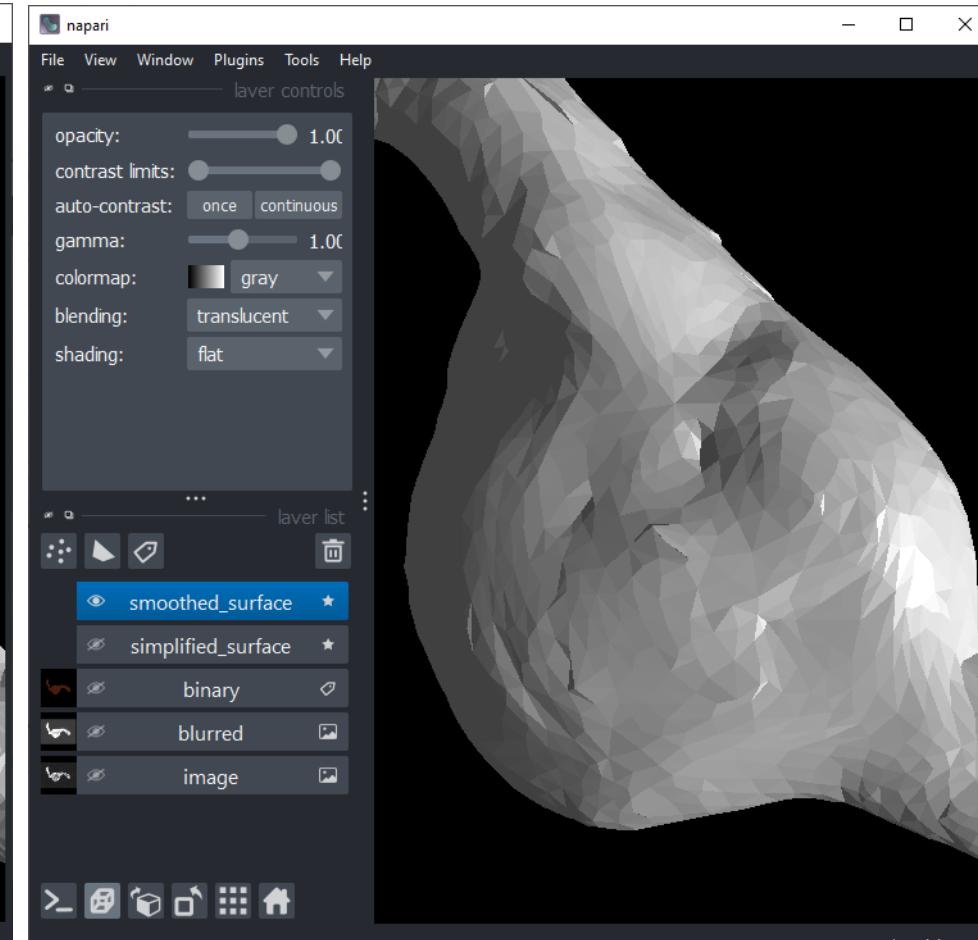
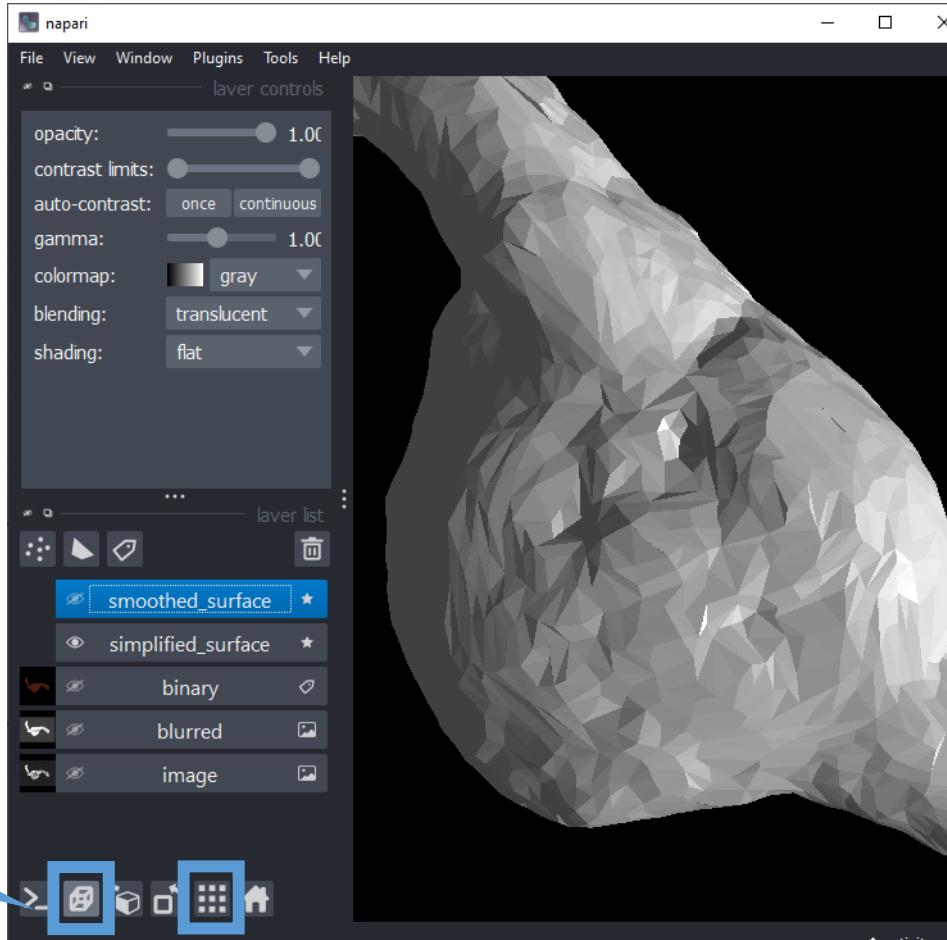
- Surface mesh smoothing



# View surface meshes in Napari

```
viewer.add_surface(surface, scale=[zoom, zoom, zoom])
viewer.add_surface(simplified_surface, scale=[zoom, zoom, zoom])
viewer.add_surface(smoothed_surface, scale=[zoom, zoom, zoom])
```

In case your computer  
freezes, comment out  
this line



# Exercises

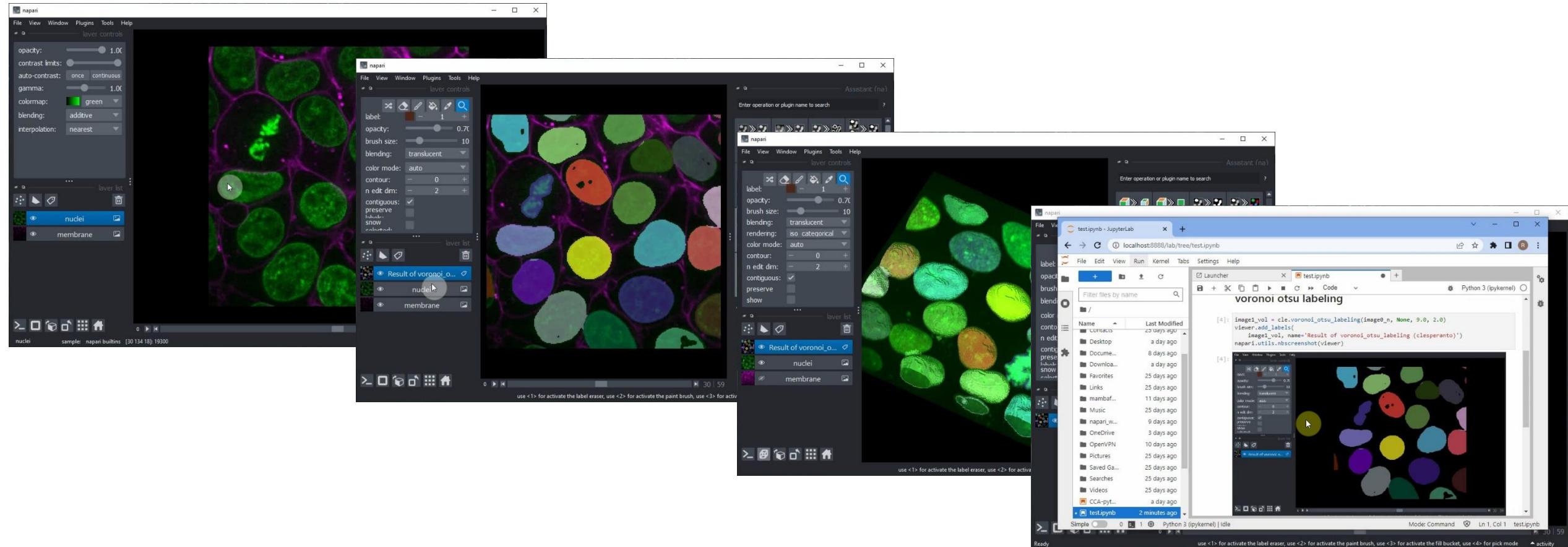
Robert Haase



April 2023

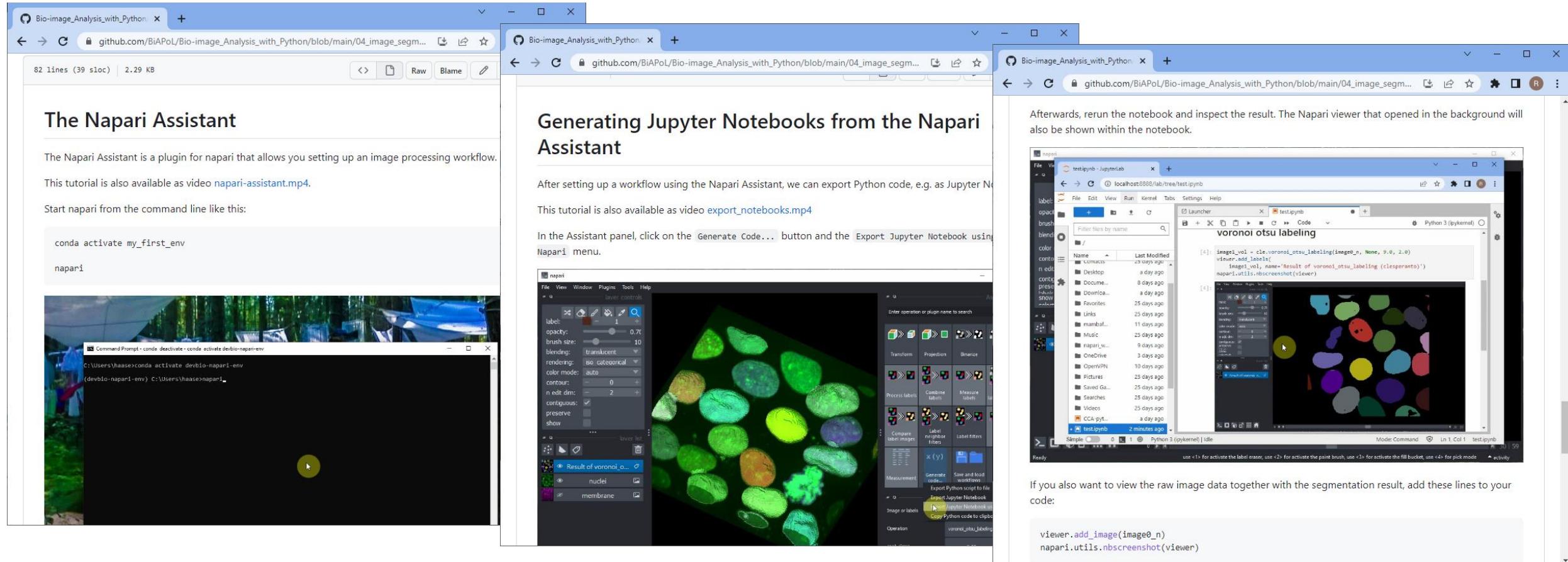
# Exercise

- Use the Napari Assistant to generate a Jupyter Notebook



# Exercise

- Follow the online instructions
- [https://github.com/BiAPoL/Bio-image\\_Analysis\\_with\\_Python/blob/main/04\\_image\\_segmentation/06\\_napari-assistant.md](https://github.com/BiAPoL/Bio-image_Analysis_with_Python/blob/main/04_image_segmentation/06_napari-assistant.md)
- [https://github.com/BiAPoL/Bio-image\\_Analysis\\_with\\_Python/blob/main/04\\_image\\_segmentation/07\\_notebook\\_export.md](https://github.com/BiAPoL/Bio-image_Analysis_with_Python/blob/main/04_image_segmentation/07_notebook_export.md)



The Napari Assistant is a plugin for napari that allows you setting up an image processing workflow.

This tutorial is also available as video [napari-assistant.mp4](#).

Start napari from the command line like this:

```
conda activate my_first_env
napari
```

After setting up a workflow using the Napari Assistant, we can export Python code, e.g. as Jupyter Notebook.

This tutorial is also available as video [export\\_notebooks.mp4](#)

In the Assistant panel, click on the `Generate Code...` button and the `Export Jupyter Notebook using Napari` menu.

```
viewer.add_image(image0_n)
napari.utils.nbscreenshot(viewer)
```

- Measure the quality of a segmentation algorithm applied to a folder of images.
- [https://github.com/BiAPoL/Bio-image Analysis with Python/blob/main/04 image segmentation/17 segmentation quality estimation.ipynb](https://github.com/BiAPoL/Bio-image Analysis with Python/blob/main/04%20image%20segmentation/17%20segmentation%20quality%20estimation.ipynb)

```
metrics.jaccard_index_sparse(sparse_labels, labels)
```

```
0.8357392602053431
```

```
for image_filename in os.listdir(image_folder):
    print(image_folder + image_filename)
```

```
.../.../data/BBBC007_batch/17P1_POS0013_D_1UL.tif
.../.../data/BBBC007_batch/20P1_POS0005_D_1UL.tif
.../.../data/BBBC007_batch/20P1_POS0007_D_1UL.tif
.../.../data/BBBC007_batch/20P1_POS0010_D_1UL.tif
.../.../data/BBBC007_batch/A9_p7d.tif
.../.../data/BBBC007_batch/AS_09125_040701150004_A02f00d0.tif
```