

Package ‘alabaster.sfe’

December 19, 2025

Type Package

Title Language agnostic on disk serialization of
SpatialFeatureExperiment

Version 1.3.0

Description Builds upon the existing ArtifactDB project, expending alabaster.spatial for
language agnostic on disk serialization of SpatialFeatureExperiment.

Depends SpatialFeatureExperiment (>= 1.9.3), alabaster.base

Imports alabaster.sce, alabaster.spatial (>= 1.5.2), EBImage,
jsonlite, methods, RBioFormats, S4Vectors, sfarrow,
SingleCellExperiment, spatialreg, spdep, SummarizedExperiment,
terra, xml2

License MIT + file LICENSE

Encoding UTF-8

LazyData true

RoxygenNote 7.3.2

Suggests BiocStyle, fs, knitr, rmarkdown, scater, sf, SFEData,
testthat (>= 3.0.0), Voyager (>= 1.9.1)

Config/testthat/edition 3

VignetteBuilder knitr

URL <https://pachterlab.github.io/alabaster.sfe/>

biocViews DataRepresentation, Spatial

BugReports <https://github.com/pachterlab/alabaster.sfe/issues>

git_url <https://git.bioconductor.org/packages/alabaster.sfe>

git_branch devel

git_last_commit a71e5d5

git_last_commit_date 2025-10-29

Repository Bioconductor 3.23

Date/Publication 2025-12-19

Author Lambda Moses [aut, cre] (ORCID:
<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7092-9427>)
Maintainer Lambda Moses <dl3764@columbia.edu>

Contents

readBioFormatsImage	2
readExtImage	3
readSF	4
readSpatialFeatureExperiment	5
readSpatRaster	5
saveObject,BioFormatsImage-method	6
saveObject,ExtImage-method	7
saveObject,sf-method	8
saveObject,SpatialFeatureExperiment-method	9
saveObject,SpatRaster-method	10
Index	12

readBioFormatsImage	<i>Read BioFormatsImage from alabaster on disk representation</i>
---------------------	---

Description

Reads the metadata and imgSource will point to the file within the on disk representation of SFE. The image itself should not be moved or the BioFormatsImabe object will no longer work.

Usage

```
readBioFormatsImage(path, metadata = NULL, ...)
```

Arguments

path	String containing a path to a directory, itself created with a saveObject method.
metadata	Named list containing metadata for the object - most importantly, the type field that controls dispatch to the correct loading function. If NULL, this is automatically read by readObjectFile (path).
...	Ignored, but used for other methods.

Value

A [BioFormatsImage](#) object for SFE.

See Also

Other readObject-SFE-image: [readExtImage\(\)](#), [readSpatRaster\(\)](#)

Examples

```

library(SFEData)
fp <- tempfile()
x1 <- XeniumOutput(dataset = "v1", file_path = file.path(fp, "xenium1"))
x2 <- XeniumOutput("v2", file_path = file.path(fp, "xenium2"))

# Single file OME-TIFF
fsave <- file.path(fp, "bfi1")
sfe <- readXenium(x1)
bfi <- getImg(sfe)
bfi <- affineImg(bfi, M = matrix(c(cos(pi/6), sin(pi/6), -sin(pi/6), cos(pi/6)), nrow = 2),
                             v = c(0,0))
saveObject(bfi, fsave)
bfi2 <- readObject(fsave)

unlink(fsave, recursive = TRUE)

# Multi file OME-TIFF
fsave <- file.path(fp, "bfi2")
sfe <- readXenium(x2)
bfi <- getImg(sfe)
saveObject(bfi, fsave)
bfi2 <- readObject(fsave)
unlink(fsave, recursive = TRUE)

```

readExtImage	<i>Read ExtImage from disk</i>
--------------	--------------------------------

Description

Read ExtImage from disk

Usage

```
readExtImage(path, metadata = NULL, ...)
```

Arguments

path	String containing a path to a directory, itself created with a saveObject method.
metadata	Named list containing metadata for the object - most importantly, the type field that controls dispatch to the correct loading function. If NULL, this is automatically read by readObjectFile (path).
...	Arguments passed to readImage .

Value

A [ExtImage](#) object for SFE.

See Also

Other readObject-SFE-image: [readBioFormatsImage\(\)](#), [readSpatRaster\(\)](#)

Examples

```
library(SFData)
fp <- tempfile()
fsave <- file.path(fp, "exi")
x1 <- XeniumOutput(dataset = "v1", file_path = file.path(fp, "xenium1"))
sfe <- readXenium(x1)
bfi <- getImg(sfe)
exi <- toExtImage(bfi)
saveObject(exi, fsave)
exi2 <- readObject(fsave)
unlink(fsave, recursive = TRUE)
```

readSF

Read sf from alabaster on disk representation

Description

Read the GeoParquet file into R. GeoParquet should also work in any programming language that supports arrow. Newer version of GDAL with Parquet driver is not strictly necessary if the geometry's WKB can be converted to whichever language specific object such as `sfc` in R.

Usage

```
readSF(path, metadata = NULL)
```

Arguments

<code>path</code>	String containing a path to a directory, itself created with a saveObject method.
<code>metadata</code>	Named list containing metadata for the object - most importantly, the <code>type</code> field that controls dispatch to the correct loading function. If <code>NULL</code> , this is automatically read by readObjectFile (path).

Value

An sf data frame

Examples

```
library(sf)
fp <- tempfile()
df <- as.data.frame(matrix(rnorm(10), ncol = 2))
df <- st_as_sf(df, coords = names(df), crs = NA)
saveObject(df, path = fp)
df2 <- readObject(fp)
```

`readSpatialFeatureExperiment`*Read SFE object from alabaster on disk representation*

Description

Read SFE object from alabaster on disk representation

Usage

```
readSpatialFeatureExperiment(path, metadata = NULL, ...)
```

Arguments

<code>path</code>	String containing a path to a directory, itself created with a saveObject method.
<code>metadata</code>	Named list containing metadata for the object - most importantly, the <code>type</code> field that controls dispatch to the correct loading function. If <code>NULL</code> , this is automatically read by readObjectFile (<code>path</code>).
<code>...</code>	Further arguments to pass to individual methods.

Value

A `SpatialFeatureExperiment` object

Examples

```
library(SFEData)
fp <- tempfile()
fn <- file.path(fp, "vizgen")
d <- VizgenOutput(dataset = "cellpose", file_path = fn)
suppressWarnings(sfe <- readVizgen(d))
fsave <- file.path(fp, "sfe_save")
saveObject(sfe, fsave)
sfe2 <- readObject(fsave)
```

`readSpatRaster`*Read SpatRaster from alabaster on disk representation*

Description

Not the same as `terra::rast`; here this function also reads the metadata file.

Usage

```
readSpatRaster(path, metadata = NULL, ...)
```

Arguments

path	String containing a path to a directory, itself created with a saveObject method.
metadata	Named list containing metadata for the object - most importantly, the type field that controls dispatch to the correct loading function. If NULL, this is automatically read by readObjectFile (path).
...	Arguments passed to rast , character method.

Value

A [SpatRasterImage](#) object for SFE.

See Also

Other readObject-SFE-image: [readBioFormatsImage\(\)](#), [readExtImage\(\)](#)

Examples

```
library(SFEData)
fp <- tempfile()
fn <- file.path(fp, "vizgen")
d <- VizgenOutput(dataset = "cellpose", file_path = fn)
suppressWarnings(sfe <- readVizgen(d))
img <- getImg(sfe)
class(img)
fsave <- file.path(fp, "img")
saveObject(img, fsave)
img2 <- readObject(fsave)
```

saveObject,BioFormatsImage-method

Save BioFormatsImage for alabaster

Description

This function copies the original file to a pre-defined location within the directory that stores the on disk representation of the SFE object for data sharing. Since BioFormatsImage is essentially just some metadata in memory and it never loads the image into memory (once the image is loaded into memory it becomes ExtImage), once the original image is moved, the BioFormatsImage object will no longer work, which is why the pre-defined location is important. This function also saves the metadata, which includes spatial extent and affine transformations.

Usage

```
## S4 method for signature 'BioFormatsImage'
saveObject(x, path, ...)
```

Arguments

x	A Bioconductor object of the specified class.
path	String containing the path to a directory in which to save x.
...	Ignored

Value

x is saved into path and NULL is invisibly returned.

See Also

Other saveObject-SFE-image: [saveObject,ExtImage-method](#), [saveObject,SpatRaster-method](#)

Examples

```
library(SFEData)
fp <- tempfile()
fsave <- file.path(fp, "bfi2")
x1 <- XeniumOutput(dataset = "v1", file_path = file.path(fp, "xenium1"))
sfe <- readXenium(x1)
bfi <- getImg(sfe)
saveObject(bfi, fsave)
bfi2 <- readObject(fsave)
unlink(fsave, recursive = TRUE)
```

saveObject,ExtImage-method

Save ExtImage to disk for alabaster

Description

Save ExtImage to disk for alabaster

Usage

```
## S4 method for signature 'ExtImage'
saveObject(x, path, ...)
```

Arguments

x	A Bioconductor object of the specified class.
path	String containing the path to a directory in which to save x.
...	Extra arguments passed to writeImage .

Value

x is saved into path and NULL is invisibly returned.

See Also

Other saveObject-SFE-image: [saveObject,BioFormatsImage-method](#), [saveObject,SpatRaster-method](#)

Examples

```
library(SFData)
fp <- tempfile()
fsave <- file.path(fp, "exi")
x1 <- XeniumOutput(dataset = "v1", file_path = file.path(fp, "xenium1"))
sfe <- readXenium(x1)
bfi <- getImg(sfe)
exi <- toExtImage(bfi)
saveObject(exi, fsave)
exi2 <- readObject(fsave)
unlink(fsave, recursive = TRUE)
```

saveObject,sf-method *Save sf to disk for alabaster*

Description

sf data frames are saved as GeoParquet.

Usage

```
## S4 method for signature 'sf'
saveObject(x, path)
```

Arguments

x	A Bioconductor object of the specified class.
path	String containing the path to a directory in which to save x.

Value

x is saved into path and NULL is invisibly returned.

Examples

```
library(sf)
fp <- tempfile()
df <- as.data.frame(matrix(rnorm(10), ncol = 2))
df <- st_as_sf(df, coords = names(df), crs = NA)
saveObject(df, path = fp)
```

 saveObject,SpatialFeatureExperiment-method

Save a SpatialFeatureExperiment object

Description

Save SFE objects to disk in an interoperable, language agnostic format that may also facilitate out of memory operations via HDF5 (non-spatial, inherited from `alabaster.sce`) and Apache Parquet (geometries).

Usage

```
## S4 method for signature 'SpatialFeatureExperiment'
saveObject(x, path, ...)
```

Arguments

<code>x</code>	A Bioconductor object of the specified class.
<code>path</code>	String containing the path to a directory in which to save <code>x</code> .
<code>...</code>	Additional named arguments to pass to specific methods.

Details

There's no new arguments for `...` for the SFE, `SpatialExperiment`, and `SingleCellExperiment` methods, but there is an argument that can be specified for `...` in the `SummarizedExperiment` method of `saveObject`.

At present, spatial results in `featureData` for geometries and dimension reductions (see [colFeatureData](#)) and parameters of spatial analyses (see [getParams](#)) are not save because those parts of the SFE object are more experimental and are subject to change. `colFeatureData` where global spatial results are stored for columns of `colData(x)` is saved by the `alabaster saveObject` method for `DataFrame`.

Value

`x` is saved into `path` and `NULL` is invisibly returned.

Examples

```
library(SpatialFeatureExperiment)
library(Voyager)
library(SFData)
library(SingleCellExperiment)
library(scater)

fp <- tempfile()
fn <- file.path(fp, "vizgen")
d <- VizgenOutput(dataset = "cellpose", file_path = fn)
```

```

suppressWarnings(sfe1 <- readVizgen(d, add_molecules = TRUE))

colGraph(sfe1, "knn5") <- findSpatialNeighbors(sfe1, method = "knearneigh", k = 5)
SpatialFeatureExperiment::centroids(sfe1)$foo <- rnorm(ncol(sfe1))
sfe1 <- logNormCounts(sfe1)
sfe1 <- runMoransI(sfe1, colGraphName = "knn5")
sfe1 <- colDataMoransI(sfe1, features = c("transcript_count", "anisotropy",
                                         "perimeter_area_ratio", "solidity"))
sfe1 <- colGeometryMoransI(sfe1, colGeometryName = "centroids", features = "foo")
sfe1 <- runPCA(sfe1, ncomponents = 10)
sfe1 <- reducedDimMoransI(sfe1, components = 1:10)

sfe1 <- runUnivariate(sfe1, type = "localmoran", features = rownames(sfe1)[1])

fsave <- file.path(fp, "sfe_vizgen")
saveObject(sfe1, fsave)
sfe2 <- readObject(fsave)

unlink(fsave, recursive = TRUE)

```

saveObject,SpatRaster-method

Save SpatRaster to disk for alabaster

Description

Intended for SpatRasterImage which really is SpatRaster that also inherits from SPE's SpatialImage. Besides writeRaster, this function also writes a metadata file in the alabaster framework. If the image is not loaded into memory and the original file is already spatially registered, e.g. it has a spatial extent, then the original file is copied to a pre-defined place in the on-disk representation of SFE and writeRaster is not called.

Usage

```
## S4 method for signature 'SpatRaster'
saveObject(x, path, ...)
```

Arguments

x	A Bioconductor object of the specified class.
path	String containing the path to a directory in which to save x.
...	Extra parameters passed to writeRaster .

Value

x is saved into path and NULL is invisibly returned.

See Also

Other saveObject-SFE-image: [saveObject,BioFormatsImage-method](#), [saveObject,ExtImage-method](#)

Examples

```
library(SFEData)
fp <- tempfile()
fn <- file.path(fp, "vizgen")
d <- VizgenOutput(dataset = "cellpose", file_path = fn)
suppressWarnings(sfe <- readVizgen(d))
img <- getImg(sfe)
class(img)
fsave <- file.path(fp, "img")
saveObject(img, fsave)
img2 <- readObject(fsave)
```

Index

- * **readObject-SFE-image**
 - readBioFormatsImage, [2](#)
 - readExtImage, [3](#)
 - readSpatRaster, [5](#)
- * **saveObject-SFE-image**
 - saveObject, BioFormatsImage-method, [6](#)
 - saveObject, ExtImage-method, [7](#)
 - saveObject, SpatRaster-method, [10](#)
- BioFormatsImage, [2](#)
- colFeatureData, [9](#)
- ExtImage, [3](#)
- getParams, [9](#)
- rast, [6](#)
- readBioFormatsImage, [2](#), [4](#), [6](#)
- readExtImage, [2](#), [3](#), [6](#)
- readImage, [3](#)
- readObjectFile, [2–6](#)
- readSF, [4](#)
- readSpatialFeatureExperiment, [5](#)
- readSpatRaster, [2](#), [4](#), [5](#)
- saveObject, [2–6](#)
- saveObject, BioFormatsImage-method, [6](#)
- saveObject, ExtImage-method, [7](#)
- saveObject, sf-method, [8](#)
- saveObject, SpatialFeatureExperiment-method, [9](#)
- saveObject, SpatRaster-method, [10](#)
- SpatRasterImage, [6](#)
- writeImage, [7](#)
- writeRaster, [10](#)