

1 **A natural *timeless* polymorphism allowing circadian clock synchronization in ‘white nights’**

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17 **Abstract**

18 Daily temporal organisation of behavioural and physiological functions offers a fitness  
19 advantage for most animals. Optimized temporal niches are determined by an interplay  
20 between external environmental rhythms and internal circadian clocks. While daily light:dark  
21 cycles serve as a robust time cue (Zeitgeber) to synchronise circadian clocks, it is not clear  
22 how animals experiencing only weak environmental cues deal with this problem. Like  
23 humans, flies of the genus *Drosophila* originate in sub-Saharan Africa and spread North in  
24 Europe up to the polar circle where they experience extremely long days in the summer or  
25 even constant light (LL). LL is known to disrupt clock function, due to constant activation of  
26 the deep brain photoreceptor CRYPTOCHROME (CRY), which induces constant degradation of  
27 the clock protein TIMELESS (TIM). Temperature cycles are able to overcome these arrhythmia  
28 inducing effects of LL, reinstating clock protein oscillations and rhythmic behaviour. We show  
29 here that for this to occur a recently evolved natural allele (*ls-tim*) of the *timeless* gene is  
30 required, whereby the presence of this allele within the central clock neurons is sufficient.  
31 The *ls-tim* allele encodes a longer, less-light sensitive form of TIM (L-TIM) in addition to the  
32 shorter (S-TIM) form, the only form encoded by the ancient *s-tim* allele. Only after blocking  
33 light-input by removing functional CRY, *s-tim* flies are able to synchronise molecular and  
34 behavioural rhythms to temperature cycles in LL. Additional removal of light input from the  
35 visual system results in a phase advance of molecular and behavioural rhythms, showing that  
36 the visual system contributes to temperature synchronization in LL. We show that *ls-tim*, but  
37 not *s-tim* flies can synchronise their behavioural activity to semi-natural LL and temperature  
38 cycle conditions reflecting long Northern Europe summer days, the season when *Drosophila*  
39 populations massively expand. Our observations suggest that this functional gain associated  
40 with *ls-tim* is driving the Northern spread of this allele by directional selection.

## 41 **Introduction**

42 Like most organisms, *Drosophila melanogaster* rely on their endogenous circadian clock to  
43 regulate rhythmic physiological and behavioural outputs. This timer is equipped with two core  
44 clock proteins CLOCK(CLK) and CYCLE(CYC) to activate the transcription of the clock genes  
45 *period (per)* and *timeless (tim)*. The translated PER and TIM proteins then terminate their own  
46 transcription through negative feedback <sup>1</sup>. This transcription/translation feedback loop,  
47 constitutes the molecular oscillator of the biological clock, which runs with a period of  
48 approximately 24 hours, even in absence of environment cues. On the other hand, this robust  
49 timing system interacts with the environment and resets itself by daily cues like fluctuating  
50 light and temperature (so called 'Zeitgeber'). CRY is an important blue light photoreceptor  
51 expressed in the *Drosophila* eye as well as in subsets of the clock neurons, which are  
52 composed of about 75 neurons expressing core clock genes in each brain hemisphere <sup>2-4</sup>. This  
53 central pacemaker contains seven anatomically well-defined clusters: three groups of dorsal  
54 neurons (DN1-3), the lateral posterior neurons (LPN), the dorsal lateral neurons (LNd) and the  
55 large and small ventral lateral neurons (l- and s-LNv). Together, they orchestrate timing of the  
56 locomotor activity patterns with external light and temperature fluctuations. When flies are  
57 exposed to light, CRY is activated and binds to TIM and the F-box protein JETLAG (JET),  
58 triggering TIM and CRY degradation in the proteasome to reset the clock network <sup>5-8</sup>.  
59 Therefore, exposure of flies to constant light (LL) leads to arrhythmicity, due to the  
60 constitutive degradation of TIM in clock neurons, mediated by CRY <sup>9,10</sup>. In addition, rhodopsin-  
61 mediated retinal photoreception contributes to circadian light input, and only if both CRY and  
62 the visual system function are ablated in parallel, circadian light synchronization is abolished  
63 <sup>11</sup>. Another important Zeitgeber to synchronise circadian rhythms is temperature. In  
64 mammals, temperature cycles (TC) with an amplitude of 1.5°C induce robust circadian gene

65 expression in cultured tissues<sup>12</sup>. Moreover, the daily fluctuation of body temperature (36°C -  
66 38.5°C) generated by the suprachiasmatic nucleus (SCN) is employed to enhance internal  
67 circadian synchronization<sup>13</sup>. In *Drosophila*, unlike cell autonomous light resetting by CRY,  
68 clock neurons receive temperature signals from peripheral thermo sensory organs including  
69 the arista and mechanosensory chordotonal organs<sup>14–17</sup>. Interestingly, robust molecular and  
70 behavioural entrainment to temperature cycles was observed under LL<sup>18,19</sup>, suggesting that  
71 cycling temperature can somehow rescue clock neurons from the effects of constant light,  
72 but the underlying molecular mechanism is unknown.

73 This ability to synchronise circadian clocks to temperature cycles in constant light may have  
74 ecological relevance. For instance, animals living above or near the Northern Arctic Circle  
75 experience LL or near-LL conditions, while the temperature still varies between ‘day’ and  
76 ‘night’ (due to differences in light intensity). In Northern Finland summers (e.g., Oulu, 65°  
77 North), the sun only sets just below the horizon and it never gets completely dark, so that  
78 organisms experience so called ‘white nights’. At the same time, average temperatures vary  
79 by 10°C between day and night ([www.timeanddate.com/sun/finland/oulu?month=7&year=2021](http://www.timeanddate.com/sun/finland/oulu?month=7&year=2021)), suggesting  
80 that animals use this temperature difference to synchronise their circadian clock. *Drosophila*  
81 *melanogaster* populate this region, with massive expansion of the population during the late  
82 summer. It has been suggested that a recently evolved novel allele of the *tim* gene is  
83 advantageous for Northern populations and that this allele is under directed natural selection  
84<sup>20–22</sup>. The novel *ls-tim* allele encodes a longer (by 23 N-terminal amino acids), less-light  
85 sensitive form of Tim (L-Tim) in addition to the shorter (S-Tim) form, the only form encoded  
86 by the ancient *s-tim* allele<sup>7,8,20,23</sup>. The reduced light-sensitivity of L-TIM is caused by a weaker  
87 light-dependent interaction with CRY, thereby resulting in increased stability of L-TIM during  
88 light, compared to S-TIM<sup>7,8,20</sup>. Indeed, *ls-tim* flies show reduced behavioural phase-responses

89 to light pulses<sup>20</sup> and are more prone to enter diapause during long summer days compared  
90 to *s-tim* flies<sup>21</sup>. It has been proposed that light-sensitivity of circadian clocks needs to be  
91 reduced in Northern latitudes, in order to compensate for the long summer days and  
92 presumably excessive light reaching the clock cells<sup>24</sup>. The *ls-tim* allele might therefore offer a  
93 selective advantage in Northern latitudes, which is indeed supported by the spread of this  
94 allele from its origin in Southern Italy 300-3000 years ago by directional selection<sup>21,22</sup>.

95 Here we provide strong support for this idea, by showing that only *ls-tim* flies are able to  
96 synchronise their circadian clock and behavioural rhythms to temperature cycles in constant  
97 light (LLTC). The observation that wild type flies carrying the ancient *s-tim* allele are not able  
98 to synchronise to LLTC demonstrate the advantage of the *ls-tim* allele in Northern latitudes.  
99 Despite of their reduced light sensitivity, *ls-tim* flies can still synchronise their circadian clock  
100 because they can use temperature cycles as Zeitgeber. We show that *ls-tim* is also required  
101 for synchronisation under semi-natural conditions mimicking ‘white nights’ conditions as they  
102 occur in natural Northern latitude habitats of *Drosophila melanogaster*, supporting the  
103 adaptive advantage of this allele.

104

## 105 **Results**

106

### 107 ***ls-tim*, but not *s-tim* flies are able to synchronise to temperature cycles in constant light**

108 During our studies of how temperature cycles synchronise the circadian clock of *Drosophila*  
109 *melanogaster*, we noticed that some genetic control stocks did not, or only very poorly,  
110 synchronise their behavioural rhythms to temperature cycles in constant light (16°C : 25°C in  
111 LL). Further analysis revealed that the ability to synchronise to LLTC was correlated with the  
112 presence of the *ls-tim* allele, while flies that did not, or only poorly synchronise, carry the *s-*

113 *tim* allele. This was true for the two isogenic *w* strains *iso31*<sup>25</sup>, and *iso*<sup>26</sup> (Figure 1A, B), as well  
114 as for common control stocks like *y w* (Figure S1A, B). As expected, regardless of *s-tim* or *ls-*  
115 *tim*, all flies showed normal synchronization to 12 hr : 12 hr light:dark (LD) cycles at constant  
116 temperature (Fig., 1A, S1A)<sup>20</sup>. Furthermore, as expected for wild type flies, independent of *s-*  
117 *tim* or *ls-tim*, all control stocks became arrhythmic in LL at constant temperatures (Fig. 1A,  
118 S1A)<sup>27</sup>. Finally, when exposed to temperature cycles in DD, both *s-tim* and *ls-tim* robustly  
119 synchronised their behavioural activity (Figure S1C), indicating that the *s-tim* allele specifically  
120 affects clock synchronization during LLTC.

121 Previous studies have shown that S-TIM is more sensitive to light compared to L-TIM, due to  
122 stronger light-dependent binding of S-TIM to CRY<sup>8,20</sup>. It is therefore likely that the increased  
123 stability of L-TIM in the presence of light is responsible for the ability of *ls-tim* flies to  
124 synchronise to LLTC. Moreover, red eye pigments of wild type *Drosophila melanogaster*  
125 protect TIM and CRY proteins from light-dependent degradation in photoreceptor cells<sup>8,28</sup>.  
126 To test if eye pigmentation also influences synchronization of *s-tim* flies during LLTC, we  
127 analysed red-eyed wild type flies carrying either the *s-tim* or the *ls-tim* allele. While Canton S  
128 carries *ls-tim*, the wild-type strain collected in Tanzania<sup>29</sup> is homozygous for *s-tim*. In addition,  
129 a wild type strain collected in Houten (The Netherlands) was analysed in both *s-tim* and *ls-tim*  
130 background<sup>21</sup>. As expected, both *ls-tim* strains showed robust synchronization to LLTC (Figure  
131 S2A, B). In contrast to most of the white-eyed *s-tim* flies we tested, the two red-eyed *s-tim*  
132 strains showed synchronised behaviour (compare Figure 1A, B and Figure S2A, B). But while  
133 in *ls-tim* flies activity started to rise around the middle of the warm phase, activity of red-eyed  
134 *s-tim* flies increased several hours earlier with a persistent activity until the end of the  
135 thermophase (Figure S2 A, B). To test if the early activity increase observed in some of *s-tim*  
136 strains reflects proper synchronisation to LLTC, we compared behaviour of *s-tim* flies with

137 *tim*<sup>KO</sup> mutant flies. *tim*<sup>KO</sup> is a new *tim* null allele in the *iso31* background, in which the *tim* locus  
138 has been replaced with a *mini-white* gene resulting in red eye colour<sup>30</sup>. Interestingly, although  
139 *tim*<sup>KO</sup> flies do not show clock-controlled behaviour in LD, their locomotor activity pattern in  
140 LLTC is equivalent to what we observed in red eye *s-tim* flies (Figure 1C, S2C). We therefore  
141 conclude that *s-tim* flies, regardless of their eye pigmentation, are not able to synchronise  
142 their clock controlled behavioural activity rhythms to temperature cycles in constant light.  
143 Next, we compared the behaviour of hemizygous *s-tim* and *ls-tim* flies. While *tim*<sup>KO</sup>/*ls-tim* flies  
144 showed normal LD and LLTC behaviour, *tim*<sup>KO</sup>/*s-tim* flies only synchronised to LD (Figure 1C).  
145 Interestingly, trans-heterozygous *s-tim/ls-tim* flies perfectly synchronise their behaviour to  
146 LLTC, showing that *ls-tim* is dominant over *s-tim* for LLTC entrainment (Figure 1C).

147

148 ***s-tim* flies fail to properly synchronise their clock protein oscillations to temperature cycles**  
149 **in constant light**

150 To distinguish if the lack of behavioural synchronization is due to a defect within or  
151 downstream of the circadian clock, we analysed PER and TIM oscillations during LLTC in clock  
152 neurons of *s-tim* and *ls-tim* flies (Figure 2, S3). As expected for *s-tim* in LL, TIM levels were  
153 lower compared to *ls-tim* flies, but detectable at all four time points we examined (ZT0, ZT6,  
154 ZT12, ZT18). While the amplitude of TIM oscillations in *s-tim* was dramatically reduced  
155 compared to *ls-tim* flies, we found that in the ventral and dorsal lateral clock neurons, TIM  
156 oscillations in *s-tim* are phase advanced by 6 hr, reaching peak values at ZT6 compared to  
157 ZT12 for *ls-tim* (Figure 2A). In the three DN groups, S-Tim levels were constitutively low at all  
158 four time points (Figure 2A). We also noticed that even in *ls-tim* flies, TIM peaks earlier  
159 compared to LD and constant temperature conditions<sup>31</sup>, correlated with the phase advance

160 of the behavioural evening peak in LLTC compared to LD (Figure 1, S1, S2) <sup>32</sup>. In addition, we  
161 found that S-TIM remains cytoplasmic at all time points studied, while in *ls-tim* flies TIM  
162 showed the typical nuclear accumulation at ZT0 (Figure S3A, C) <sup>31</sup>. Similarly, PER levels were  
163 drastically reduced in *s-tim* compared to *ls-tim* flies in the PDF-positive LNv and LNd, and PER  
164 was undetectable in the 5<sup>th</sup> s-LNv (Figure 2B, S3B, D). Due to the low levels it was impossible  
165 to clearly distinguish between cytoplasmic and nuclear localisation, but the results indicate  
166 constitutive nuclear and cytoplasmic PER distribution at all four time points examined (Figure  
167 S3 B, D). The only exception were the DN3, which showed significant PER oscillations in *s-tim*  
168 flies, indicating the existence of an alternative system to control PER oscillations at least in  
169 this group of neurons (Figure 2B). Overall, the results indicate that the drastic impairment of  
170 synchronised TIM and PER protein expression in clock neurons underlies the inability of *s-tim*  
171 behavioural synchronization to LLTC.

172

### 173 **Cryptochrome depletion allows synchronisation of *s-tim* flies to temperature cycles in** 174 **constant light**

175 *s-tim* flies are more sensitive to light compared to *ls-tim* flies, presumably because the light-  
176 dependent interaction between CRY and S-TIM is stronger compared to that of CRY and L-TIM  
177 <sup>8,20</sup>. To test if the inability of *s-tim* flies to synchronise to LLTC is due to the increased S-  
178 TIM:CRY interaction and subsequent degradation of TIM <sup>8</sup>, we compared the behaviour of *s-*  
179 *tim* and *ls-tim* flies in the absence of *cry* function using the same environmental protocol. As  
180 expected, both *cry*<sup>02</sup> and *cry*<sup>b</sup> mutant flies showed rhythmic behaviour in LL and constant  
181 temperature (Figure 3A, S4A) <sup>9,26</sup>. Strikingly, the *s-tim* flies lacking CRY were now able to  
182 synchronise to LLTC, similar to *cry*<sup>02</sup> flies carrying the *ls-tim* allele (Figure 3A, B). Notably, upon  
183 release into LL and constant temperature, activity peaks of both genotypes were aligned with



184 those during the last few days in LLTC, indicating stable synchronisation of clock-driven  
185 behavioural rhythms (Figure 3A, B, S4A).

186

187 **Cryptochrome depletion partially restores molecular synchronisation of *s-tim* flies to**  
188 **temperature cycles in constant light**

189 The behavioural results of *s-tim* flies lacking CRY described above, suggest that PER and TIM  
190 protein oscillations within clock neurons that underlie behavioural rhythms are also  
191 synchronised in LLTC. To confirm that *s-tim* flies lacking functional CRY are able to synchronise  
192 their molecular clock, we determined PER and TIM levels in different subsets of clock neurons  
193 of *s-tim cry<sup>02</sup>* flies at four different time points during LLTC. Overall, we observed robust PER  
194 and TIM oscillations in s-LNv and LNd clock neurons of *s-tim cry<sup>02</sup>* flies, demonstrating that  
195 removal of CRY restores molecular synchronization in *s-tim* flies during LLTC (Figure 3C, D,  
196 S4B, C). Nevertheless, PER and TIM oscillations were not identical to those observed in *Is-tim*  
197 *cry<sup>+</sup>* flies under the same conditions (compare Figure 3C, D with Figure 2A, B). To our surprise,  
198 we found desynchronization between and within groups. Notably, there was an obvious  
199 discrepancy in terms of PER amplitude between the LNd/5<sup>th</sup> and the LNv PDF<sup>+</sup> neurons, even  
200 though these cells are positioned anteriorly (i.e., the reduction of amplitude is not caused by  
201 brain tissue that could interfere with the confocal imaging) (Figure 3D, S4B, C). In contrast,  
202 TIM showed clear oscillations in both groups of PDF<sup>+</sup> LNv, with trough values during the first  
203 half of the warm phase and increasing levels up to the middle of the cold phase (Figure 3C,  
204 S4B, C). Furthermore, while the amplitude of PER and TIM oscillation is comparable within  
205 the LNd/5<sup>th</sup>, there was a clear phase difference between LNd CRY<sup>+</sup> and the 5<sup>th</sup> compared to  
206 the LNd CRY<sup>-</sup> (the LNd were distinguished based on the larger size of the CRY<sup>+</sup> neurons), with

207 the trough of PER and TIM in the LNd CRY<sup>-</sup> phase-advanced by at least 6 hr compared to the  
208 CRY<sup>+</sup> neurons (Figure 3C, D, S4B). Moreover, the overall TIM phase is advanced by 6 hr  
209 compared to that of PER in these neurons. Apart from half of the ~15 DN1p neurons, the  
210 neurons belonging to the three DN groups do not express CRY<sup>+</sup>. Interestingly, in these  
211 neurons TIM peaks at ZT12 as in the LNd CRY<sup>-</sup>, with the DN1p oscillating with the highest  
212 amplitude (Figure 3C). To summarize, in *s-tim cry<sup>02</sup>* flies, the six LNd and the 5<sup>th</sup> sLNv are the  
213 only clock neurons showing high amplitude PER oscillations, and the CRY<sup>-</sup> LNd, and DN  
214 neurons show drastic phase advances of PER (LNd only) and TIM oscillations compared to the  
215 LNd CRY<sup>+</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> LNv evening cells.

216

217 **Rhodopsin photoreception contributes to circadian clock synchronization in constant light**  
218 **and temperature cycles.**

219 The constitutive cytoplasmic localisation of TIM in *s-tim* flies during LLTC in both CRY<sup>+</sup> and  
220 CRY<sup>-</sup> cells (Figure S3A, C), suggests that the visual system also contributes to circadian  
221 temperature synchronisation in the presence of light. To test this hypothesis, we analysed *s-*  
222 *tim* flies lacking CRY, in which Rhodopsin-expressing photoreceptor cells are either absent (via  
223 cell ablation using GMR-hid), or in which the major phototransduction cascade is interrupted  
224 due to the absence of Phospholipase C-β (PLC-β, via loss-of-function mutation of *norpA*).  
225 Completely removing both the visual system and CRY renders the brain clock blind to light  
226 entrainment<sup>11</sup>, which is exactly what we observed with the *s-tim GMR-hid cry<sup>01</sup>* flies analysed  
227 here (Figure 4A). In contrast, due to *norpA*-independent Rhodopsin photoreception, *norpA<sup>P41</sup>*  
228 *cry<sup>b</sup>* double mutants can still be entrained to LD<sup>33–35</sup>, consistent with what we here observe  
229 for the *norpA<sup>P41</sup> s-tim cry<sup>02</sup>* double mutants (Figure 4A). Strikingly, after switch to LLTC both

230 genotypes synchronise their behaviour, however with a clear phase advance compared to *s-*  
231 *tim cry*<sup>02</sup> flies in the same condition (Figure 4B). Interestingly, *norpA*<sup>P41</sup> *s-tim cry*<sup>02</sup> double  
232 mutants take longer to establish a similar early phase as the *s-tim GMR-hid cry*<sup>01</sup> flies (Figure  
233 4A). We attribute this difference to the initial synchronization of *norpA*<sup>P41</sup> *s-tim cry*<sup>02</sup> flies to  
234 the LD cycle, and their maintained synchronised free running activity in LL and constant  
235 temperature (Figure 4A, B). In contrast, the *s-tim GMR-hid cry*<sup>01</sup> flies are completely  
236 desynchronised at the beginning of the LLTC, presumably allowing for rapid synchronisation  
237 to the temperature cycle. In conclusion, the results indicate that a photoreceptors using a  
238 *norpA*-dependent signalling pathway play a role in phasing the behaviour in LLTC.

239 To see if the Rhodopsin contribution to phasing behaviour in LLTC has a molecular correlate,  
240 we analysed TIM expression in *s-tim* flies lacking PLC-β and CRY (*norpA*<sup>P41</sup> *cry*<sup>b</sup>). We observed  
241 a clear phase advance of TIM oscillations in LNd, the s-LNv and l-LNv, as well as DN1p clock  
242 neurons, with peak or close-to-peak levels occurring at ZT9 and being maintained at peak  
243 levels until ZT16 (Figure 4C, S5A). Compared to *Is-tim* and *s-tim cry*<sup>02</sup> flies TIM cycles with a  
244 phase advance of about 3 hours (compare Figure 4C to Figures 2 and 3). The molecular phase  
245 advance of TIM cycling observed in several of the clock neuronal groups correlates with the  
246 behavioural phase advance we observe in *GMR-hid cry*<sup>01</sup>, *norpA*<sup>P41</sup> *cry*<sup>02</sup>, and *norpA*<sup>P41</sup> *cry*<sup>b</sup>  
247 flies (Figure 4, S5D). Interestingly, single *norpA*<sup>P41</sup> *s-tim* flies completely abolished the low  
248 amplitude oscillations of cytoplasmic TIM abundance observed in *s-tim* flies (Figure 2A, Figure  
249 4C, S5B, C). Not surprisingly, *norpA*<sup>P41</sup> *s-tim* flies also fail to synchronise their behavioural  
250 activity to LLTC (Figure S5D). Taken together, these results indicate that *norpA*-dependent  
251 visual photoreception contributes to synchronization of TIM oscillations in clock neurons  
252 during LLTC to influence the behavioural activity of wild type flies.

253

254 ***Is-tim* expression in clock neurons is sufficient for temperature synchronisation in constant**  
255 **light.**

256 Because *norpA*-dependent visual system function contributes to synchronization of TIM  
257 oscillations in clock neurons during LLTC (Figure 4C), we wondered if expressing the *Is-tim*  
258 allele specifically in clock neurons or photoreceptors in otherwise *s-tim* flies, would also  
259 restore synchronization. For this we first recombined a *UAS-Is-tim*<sup>36</sup> transgene with the *tim*<sup>KO</sup>  
260 allele (Methods) and crossed the recombinant flies to *s-tim* flies and *tim*<sup>KO</sup> stocks. As  
261 expected, *UAS-Is-tim, tim*<sup>KO</sup> / *s-tim* and *UAS-Is-tim, tim*<sup>KO</sup> / *tim*<sup>KO</sup> flies did not synchronise to  
262 LLTC (Figure 5A, B, S6A). Next, we crossed *UAS-Is-tim, tim*<sup>KO</sup> flies to *Clk856-Gal4* (expressed in  
263 all clock neurons and not in photoreceptor cells:<sup>37</sup>), and to *Rh1-Gal4* (expressed in  
264 photoreceptor cells R1 to R6, but not in clock neurons:<sup>38</sup>). Strikingly, expression of *Is-tim* in  
265 clock neurons was sufficient to restore robust synchronization to LLTC, while expression in R1  
266 to R6 had no effect (Figure 5, S6A-C). While we cannot rule out a role for *Is-tim* in the R7 and  
267 R8 cells, the results unequivocally show that presence of the less-light-sensitive L-TIM form in  
268 clock neurons is sufficient for allowing temperature synchronisation in LL.

269

270 **The *Is-tim* allele enables flies to synchronise in white nights under semi natural conditions**

271 In order to determine if the *Is-tim* allele can be advantageous in natural conditions, we  
272 analysed behaviour under LLTC conditions experienced in the summer in Northern Europe.  
273 We decided to mimic the conditions of a typical summer day in Oulu, Finland (65° North) for  
274 two reasons. First, *Drosophila melanogaster* populate Northern Scandinavian regions in this

275 latitude and overwinter here (e.g.,<sup>39</sup>). Second, from mid-May to the end of June day length  
276 varies from 19-22 hours, and the rest of the ‘night’ corresponds to civil twilight, where the  
277 sun does not set more than 6° below the horizon and general activities can be performed  
278 without artificial light (‘white nights’, maximum darkness between 1-3 lux). At the same time  
279 average temperatures vary by 10°C between day and night, reaching an average maximum of  
280 20°C in July. To mimic these conditions, we programmed a 2.5 hr period with 1 lux light  
281 intensity (civil twilight) and 12 hr of 200 lux interspersed by ramps with linear increases  
282 (morning) or decreases (evening) of light intensity (Figure 6A). Temperature cycled over 24 hr  
283 with linear ramps between 12°C and 19°C, reaching its minimum towards the end of the civic  
284 twilight period and its maximum in the middle of the 200 lux phase (Figure 6A). Using these  
285 conditions, we analysed two  $w^+$  and one  $w^-$  *s-tim* strains. Interestingly, all of these strains  
286 showed the same broad activity phase covering a large part of the 200 lux day period (Figure  
287 6B, C, S7). In addition, all *s-tim* strains showed a pronounced 2<sup>nd</sup> activity peak during the 3.5  
288 hours of down-ramping the light intensity from 200 lux to 1 lux (Figure 6B, C, S7). In contrast,  
289 both *ls-tim* strains we tested ( $w^+$  and  $w^-$ ) showed only one defined activity peak during the 2<sup>nd</sup>  
290 half of the 200 lux phase and activity increase coincided precisely with the onset of the  
291 temperature decrease (Figure 6B, C, S7). The results indicate that the synchronised circadian  
292 clock in *ls-tim* flies is responsible for a suppression of behavioural activity during the phase of  
293 increasing temperature. Interestingly, a similar repression of behavioural activity during  
294 ramped temperature cycles in DD depends on the gene *nocte*, which is required for  
295 temperature synchronisation during DD and LL<sup>15,16</sup>. *nocte* mutants steadily increase their  
296 activity with rising temperature<sup>15</sup>, similar to what we observe here for *s-tim* flies (Figure 6B,  
297 S7A), indicating a failure to synchronize their clock to the temperature cycle. To test this, we  
298 also analysed clock-less flies (*tim*<sup>KO</sup>), which showed essentially the same behaviour as *s-tim*

299 flies (Figure 6B, C), indicating that *s-tim* flies are not able to synchronise their clock in Northern  
300 summer conditions as for example experienced in Oulu. Finally, to test if the same mechanism  
301 responsible for the lack of *s-tim* synchronization to rectangular laboratory LLTC conditions  
302 operates under semi-natural conditions, we also analysed *s-tim cry*<sup>02</sup> flies under Oulu summer  
303 conditions. Strikingly, without CRY, *s-tim* flies showed essentially the same behaviour as *l*-  
304 *tim* flies (Figure 6B, C), indicating that the reduced light-sensitivity of the L-TIM:CRY  
305 interaction enables *l*-*tim* flies to synchronise their clock in Northern summers.

306

## 307 **Discussion**

308 Light and temperature serve as two universal Zeitgebers to time the circadian clock in  
309 *Drosophila* and many other organisms. In *Drosophila*, exposure to constant light breaks down  
310 the clock machinery leading to arrhythmic locomotor activity<sup>10,27</sup>. This is likely due to  
311 constitutively low TIM levels in clock neurons caused by constant activation of the circadian  
312 photoreceptor CRY<sup>5,8,9</sup>. Cycling temperature, on the other hand, serves as another potent  
313 Zeitgeber to synchronise the circadian clock independent of light, suggesting the circadian  
314 thermo input is distinct from the light input at the circuit level. Interestingly, temperature  
315 cycles can 'override' the effects of constant light and restore rhythmicity, both at the  
316 molecular and behavioural level<sup>18,19</sup>. Core clock proteins such as TIM and PER abolish their  
317 oscillation when exposed to constant light, but the rhythmic expression of those proteins is  
318 restored by temperature cycles in both peripheral tissues and central pacemakers, suggesting  
319 the existence of a functional clock in these conditions. But the mechanisms that protect TIM  
320 from constant degradation by light during temperature cycles was so far an unresolved  
321 question.

322 We show here that only flies that carry the novel *ls-tim* allele can be synchronised to  
323 temperature cycles in LL, whereas flies carrying the ancient *s-tim* allele cannot. *ls-tim* is  
324 derived from *s-tim* by the insertion of single G nucleotide, which enables the usage of an  
325 additional upstream Methionine. As a result, *ls-tim* flies generate two TIM proteins: the  
326 original S-TIM (1398 amino acids) and L-TIM, carrying 23 additional N-terminal amino acids.  
327 In contrast, *s-tim* flies can only produce S-TIM<sup>23</sup>. L-TIM is less sensitive to light (more stable)  
328 compared to S-TIM, due to a weaker light-dependent interaction with the photoreceptor CRY  
329<sup>8,20</sup>. This explains why *ls-tim* flies show reduced behavioural phase shifts in response to brief  
330 light pulses and why they are more prone to enter diapause in long photoperiods compared  
331 to *s-tim* flies<sup>20,21</sup>. The impaired L-TIM:CRY interaction is also the reason why *ls-tim* flies can  
332 synchronise to LLTC, because removal of CRY enables *s-tim* flies to synchronise as well (Figure  
333 3, S3). Nevertheless, both *s-tim* and *ls-tim* flies do become arrhythmic in LL at constant  
334 temperature, meaning that in *ls-tim* flies temperature cycles still somehow overcome the  
335 arrhythmia inducing effects of constant light. Presumably L-TIM levels in LL are below a  
336 threshold to support rhythmicity at constant temperatures, while above a threshold enabling  
337 the response to rhythmic temperature changes.

338 Our observation that removal of visual system function in the context of a *cry* mutant  
339 background leads to a behavioural phase advance, supports a role for visual system light input  
340 in phasing behaviour during temperature entrainment. Interestingly, in constant darkness  
341 and temperature cycles, wild type flies show the same early activity phase at the beginning  
342 of the thermo period as visual system impaired *cry* mutants in LLTC (Figure 4A, B, S5D)<sup>32</sup>.  
343 Moreover, restricting clock function to the the 5<sup>th</sup> s-LNv, and the majority of the LNd and DN  
344 neurons in *cry* mutant flies, resulted in an activity peak late in the thermo phase, both in LLTC  
345 and DDTC conditions, similar to that of wild type flies in LLTC (Figure 1A)<sup>32</sup>. The drastic phase

346 difference in DDTC between wild type and *cry* mutant flies with a functional clock restricted  
347 to dorsal clock neurons, indicates that these dorsally located neurons (including at least some  
348 of the E-cells) are sufficient to drive behaviour in 16°C : 25°C temperature cycles, but that  
349 other clock neurons contribute to setting the behavioural activity phase in the absence of  
350 light or impaired light-input to the circadian clock neurons (Figures 1, 3, 5)<sup>32,40</sup>.

351

352 The *ls-tim* allele arose approximately 300-3000 years ago in southern Europe from where it is  
353 currently spreading northward by seasonal directional selection<sup>21,22</sup>. *ls-tim* enhances  
354 diapause, which presumably serves as driving force for this natural selection, by providing  
355 advantages in coping with the shorter day-length and earlier winter onset in higher latitudes.  
356<sup>21,22</sup>. In addition to an earlier onset of winter, northern latitudes are also characterized by  
357 extremely long photoperiods in the summer, and north of the Arctic Circle even constant light.  
358 Our finding that *ls-tim* enables flies to synchronise to temperature cycles in constant light and  
359 particularly to semi-natural conditions mimicking white nights in Finland, indicates that this  
360 allele provides an additional fitness advantage during long photoperiods. Considering the  
361 massive population expansion of *Drosophila* during the summer and that daily timing of  
362 activity offers a fitness advantage (e.g.,<sup>41</sup>), we propose that the ability to synchronise to  
363 temperature cycles in long summer days constitutes the main positive selection drive for this  
364 allele. This positive drive is further boosted by the dominance of *ls-tim* over *s-tim*, i.e.,  
365 heterozygous *ls-tim/s-tim* flies are able to synchronise as efficiently to LLTC as homozygous  
366 *ls-tim/ls-tim* flies do (Figure 1, S1C).

367 Interestingly, other high-latitude *Drosophila* species also show reduced light sensitivity of  
368 their circadian clock, although via a different mechanism. These species (for example *D.*



369 *ezoana* and *D. littoralis*) reduce light-sensitivity of the circadian clock by omitting CRY  
370 expression from the I-LNV clock neurons, thereby enabling their adaptation to long  
371 photoperiods<sup>29,42</sup>. Furthermore, several Northern latitude fly species have lost the ability to  
372 maintain free-running rhythms in constant darkness, implying that a circadian clock is not  
373 required in long summer day conditions<sup>29,42,43</sup>. It is not known however, if these species are  
374 able to synchronise to white nights or to temperature cycles in LL. Our results indicate that  
375 under Northern latitude summer conditions, the lack of a robust clock can be compensated  
376 by the ability to synchronise molecular behavioural and rhythms to temperature cycles.  
377 Nevertheless, it seems clear that independent strategies have evolved allowing insects to  
378 cope with light and temperature conditions in high-latitudes.

379

380

## 381 **Methods**

382

### 383 **Fly stains**

384 Flies were reared on cornmeal-sucrose food at 18 C or 25°C under 12 hr : 12 hr LD cycles and  
385 60% humidity until used in experiments. The following strains were used in this study:  
386 *norpA<sup>P41</sup>* and *norpA<sup>P41</sup>*, *cry<sup>b</sup>*<sup>35</sup>, *norpA<sup>P41</sup>*, *cry<sup>02</sup>*<sup>34</sup>; *cry<sup>b</sup>*<sup>3</sup>, *cry<sup>01</sup>*, *cry<sup>02</sup>* and *w*; *iso s-tim*<sup>26</sup>, *Clk856-*  
387 *gal4*<sup>37</sup>, *y w*; *s-tim* and *y w*; *ls-tim*<sup>44</sup>, *w*; *iso31 ls-tim*<sup>25</sup>, *gmr-hid*<sup>45</sup>; *Rh1-gal4* (BL8688). The *UAS-*  
388 *tim2.5* transgene encodes L-TIM and S-TIM<sup>36</sup> and is inserted on a *s-tim* chromosome. It was  
389 combined with *tim<sup>KO</sup>*<sup>30</sup> using standard meiotic recombination. Wild type stocks used were  
390 Canton S (*ls-tim*, Jeffrey Hall lab), Tanzania (*s-tim*)<sup>29</sup>, and Houten (Hu) (*s-tim* and *ls-tim*

391 versions) <sup>21</sup>. If necessary *ls-tim* and *s-tim* chromosomes were exchanged using standard  
392 genetic crosses. *ls-tim/s-tim* genotypes were confirmed by PCR <sup>23</sup>.

393

#### 394 **Behavioral assays**

395 3-5 days old male flies were used for locomotor activity tests with the *Drosophila* Activity  
396 Monitor System (DAM, Trikinetics Inc). Fly activity was recorded in light- and temperature-  
397 controlled incubators (Percival, USA) every minute. Environmental protocols are indicated on  
398 next to the first actogram in every figure. LLTC was phase delayed with respect to the original  
399 LD cycle by 5h. Light intensity was between 400 and 800 lux (white fluorescence light). DDTC  
400 was advanced by 8h with respect to the initial LD cycle. A fly tool box implemented in MATLAB  
401 (Math Works) was employed for plotting actograms and histograms <sup>46</sup>. Behavior was  
402 quantified using a custom Excel macro <sup>30</sup>. 30min bin activity was normalized to the maximum  
403 level of activity for each fly. The median of this normalized activity was plotted, allowing to  
404 visualize the level of synchronization within a strain <sup>30</sup>. The same macro was used for plotting  
405 the light and temperature in Figure 6A, C, and Figure S7B).

406

#### 407 **Immunohistochemistry and quantification**

408 Immunostaining of whole-mount brains was performed as described in <sup>15</sup> for Figure 4C. In brief,  
409 flies for LLTC experiments were reared in LL and 25°C for 3 days, followed by 6 days of 25°C:  
410 16°C LLTC. Brains were fixed and dissected on the day 7 of the temperature cycles at the  
411 indicated time points. Primary rat anti-TIM (1:1,000; <sup>47</sup>), and secondary rabbit AlexaFlour-488  
412 (Invitrogen, 1:500) were applied for 12 hours at 4°C before the brains were mounted in  
413 Vectashield mounting medium. Brains were observed with a Leica TCS SP8 confocal

414 microscope with a 20x objective. To quantify the staining signals, pixel intensity of stained  
415 neurons and background for each neural groups were measured using ImageJ (NIH), the signal  
416 intensities were determined by subtracting average background signals from neuronal signals  
417 from pixel values of two surrounding regions. Average intensities for each time point and  
418 neuronal group represent at least 8 hemispheres for each genotype. Data were normalized  
419 by setting the peak value to 1 and the ratio from each time point was then divided by the  
420 peak value. For all the other immunostaining experiments, the protocol used was the same  
421 as previously described <sup>30</sup>. Flies were placed in LL for 2 days and then entrained with a LLTC  
422 cycle and dissected on the 6<sup>th</sup> cycle. Brains were dissected in PBST 0.1% and fixed for 20 min  
423 at room temperature in PFA 4%. After 3 washes brains were blocked for one hour at room  
424 temperature in PBST 0.1% + 5% goat serum. Primary antibodies were incubated for 48 h (in  
425 PBST 0.1% + 5% goat serum) at 4°C, while secondary incubation was done overnight at 4°C.  
426 Brains were mounted using Vectashield. Rat anti-TIM generated against TIM-fragment 222-  
427 577 <sup>48</sup> (kind gift of Isaac Edery) was used at 1/2000. Monoclonal anti-PDF (DSHB) was used at  
428 1/1000, and pre-absorbed Rabbit anti-PER <sup>49</sup> was used at 1/15000. Secondary antibodies  
429 used: goat cross absorbed anti-mice 488 ++ 1/2000 (Invitrogen), goat anti-rabbit 555 1/2000  
430 (Invitrogen) and anti-rat 647 1/1000 (Invitrogen). Brains were imaged with a Leica TCS SP8  
431 confocal microscope with a 63x objective. Average intensity was measured using ImageJ and  
432 quantification was normalized to the background: (signal-background)/background <sup>50</sup>.

433

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439

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556

557

558

559



560 **Figure legends**

561

562 **Figure 1: *s-tim* flies cannot synchronise their behaviour to temperature cycles in constant**

563 **light. A)** Group actograms of the genotypes indicated representing average activity of one

564 experiment. Environmental conditions are indicated next to the actogram on the upper left.

565 LD: 12h-12h Light-Dark constant 25°C, LL: constant light and 25°C, LLTC: LL and 25°C-16°C

566 temperature cycles. White areas: lights-on, and 25°C, grey areas: lights-off and 25°C during

567 LD and lights-on and 16°C during LLTC. N (*w, iso31 ls-tim*): 20, (*w, iso s-tim*): 20. **B)** Median of

568 normalised activity during day 6 of LLTC of independent experiments combined. Yellow bar:

569 thermophase, blue bar cryophase (12h each). N (*w, iso31 ls-tim*): 74, (*w, iso s-tim*): 65. **C)** Left:

570 Group actograms of the genotypes indicated representing average activity of one experiment

571 as in (A). Right: median of the normalised activity during LLTC6. N: (*tim<sup>KO</sup>*): 9, (*w;s-tim/ls-tim*):

572 15, (*tim<sup>KO</sup>/ls-tim*): 5, (*tim<sup>KO</sup>/s-tim*): 12.

573

574 **Figure 2: During constant light and temperature cycles TIM and PER oscillations are strongly**

575 **dampened in clock neurons of *s-tim* flies.** Averages of normalised TIM **(A)** and PER **(B)** levels

576 (see Methods) in the different groups of clock neurons during day six of LLTC in *y w; ls-tim*

577 (blue lines) and *y w; s-tim* flies (orange lines). Number of brain hemispheres/time points = 4

578 to 10. Error bars = *sem* (standard error of the mean). PER was not detectable in the 5<sup>th</sup> s-LNv

579 of *s-tim* flies. A Mann Whitney test was performed (with a Bonferroni correction) to compare

580 *s-tim* ZT6 with the other time points to determine the significance of potential oscillations.

581 For TIM, no significant oscillations were observed in any of the DN groups. For PER, only the

582 DN3 showed significant oscillations: \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.0001$ .

583

584 **Figure 3: Cryptochrome depletion partially restores behavioural and molecular**  
585 **synchronisation during constant light and temperature cycles in *s-tim* flies. A)** Group  
586 actograms of one representative experiment as described in the legend for Figure 1A. N (*Is-*  
587 *tim; cry<sup>02</sup>*): 17, (*s-tim; cry<sup>02</sup>*):20. **B)** Median of normalised activity of independent experiments  
588 combined during day 6 (left panel) of LLTC and day two of LL after LLTC (right panel). Yellow  
589 bar: thermophase, blue bar: cryophase (12h each). N for left panel: (*Is-tim; cry<sup>02</sup>*): 76; (*s-tim;*  
590 *cry<sup>02</sup>*): 96. N for right panel: (*Is-tim; cry<sup>02</sup>*): 36; (*s-tim;cry<sup>02</sup>*): 54. **C-D)** Averages of normalised  
591 TIM (C) and PER (D) levels in the different groups of clock neurons during day six of LLTC in *s-*  
592 *tim; cry<sup>02</sup>* flies. Number of brain hemispheres/time point = 4 - 10. Error bars = *sem* (standard  
593 error of the mean).

594

595 **Figure 4: Visual system function delays behavioural activity and TIMELESS oscillations of**  
596 **Cryptochrome-depleted *s-tim* flies in constant light and temperature cycles. A)** Group  
597 actograms of one representative experiment as described in the legend for Figure 1A. N  
598 (*GMR-hid, s-tim; cry<sup>01</sup>*): 17, (*norpA<sup>P41</sup>; s-tim; cry<sup>02</sup>*): 19. **B)** Median of normalised activity of  
599 independent experiments combined during day 6 (left panel) of LLTC and day two of LL after  
600 LLTC (right panel). Yellow bar: thermophase, blue bar: cryophase (12h each). N for left/right  
601 panel (*s-tim, cry<sup>02</sup>*): 56/45, (*norpA<sup>P41</sup>; s-tim; cry<sup>02</sup>*): 49/40, (*GMR-hid, s-tim; cry<sup>01</sup>*): 32/30. **C)**  
602 Quantification of TIM levels in different clusters of clock neurons of *y w; s-tim, norpA<sup>P41</sup>; s-tim*  
603 and *norpA<sup>P41</sup>; s-tim ; cry<sup>b</sup>* during day 5 of LLTC. Orange and blue bars indicate 25°C and 16°C,  
604 respectively. 8 – 10 brain hemispheres were analysed for each genotype. Error bars indicate

605 *sem* (standard error of the mean). Two-way ANOVA with Bonferroni multiple comparisons  
606 was applied (\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.001$ , \*\*\*\*  $p < 0.0001$ ).

607

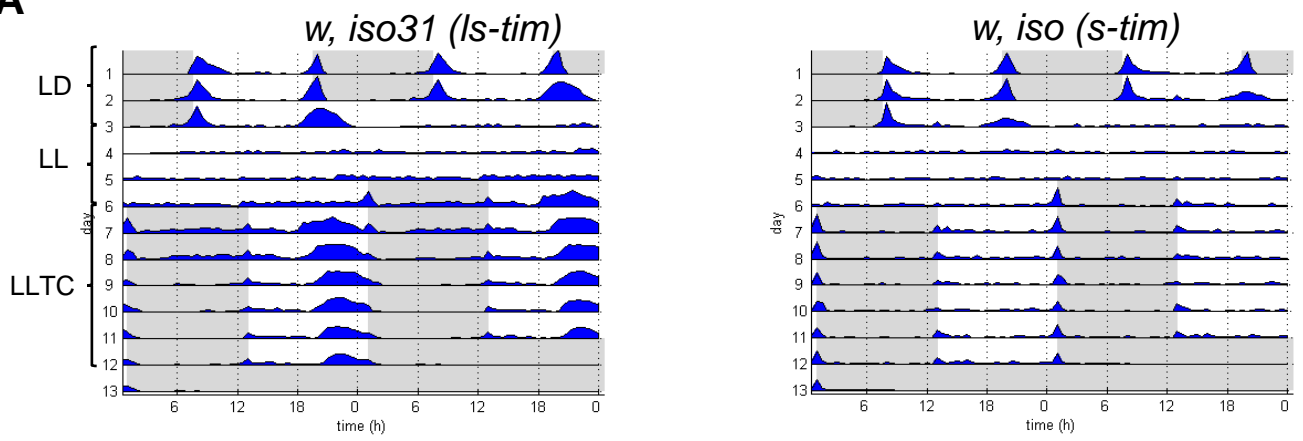
608 **Figure 5: Expression of *Is-tim* within clock neurons is sufficient for synchronisation to**  
609 **temperature cycles in constant light. A)** Group actograms of one representative experiment  
610 of the indicated genotypes as described in the legend for Figure 1A . N (*UAS-Is-tim, tim<sup>KO</sup>/s-*  
611 *tim*): 9, (*Clk856-Gal4; s-tim/UAS-Is-tim, tim<sup>KO</sup>*): 20, (*Clk856-Gal4; s-tim/tim<sup>KO</sup>*): 17. **B)** Median  
612 of normalised activity during day 6 of LLT from the flies shown in A. Yellow bar: thermophase,  
613 blue bar cryophase (12h each).

614

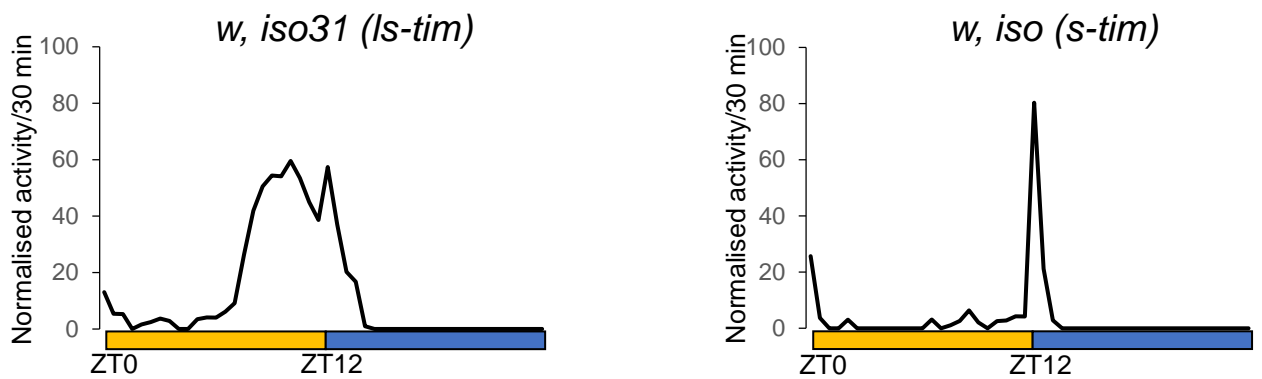
615 **Figure 6: Only *Is-tim* flies are able to synchronise to Northern latitude summer conditions.**  
616 **A)** Changes in daily light intensity (left graph) and temperature (right graph) recorded within  
617 the incubator programmed to reflect summer conditions in Oulu, Finland (65° North). **B)**  
618 Group actograms and corresponding histograms of the last three days of one representative  
619 experiment in semi-natural Oulu conditions. White areas and bars: periods of light, and light  
620 ramping. Grey areas and bars, periods of 0.1 lux, reflecting civil twilight. Triangles under the  
621 histograms indicate the initiation of the light ramping (increase and decrease between 0.1 lux  
622 and 200 lux). The blue line above the histograms indicate the temperature ramping (between  
623 12°C and 19°C). N (Canton S): 19; (*w<sup>t</sup>; s-tim [Hu]*): 20; (*s-tim; cry<sup>02</sup>*): 21; (*tim<sup>KO</sup>*): 14. C) Median  
624 of normalised activity of independent experiments combined during the 6<sup>th</sup> day of Oulu  
625 condition. Yellow and blue lines indicate light and temperature ramping, respectively. N  
626 (Canton S): 38; (*w<sup>t</sup>; s-tim [Hu]*): 39; (*s-tim; cry<sup>02</sup>*): 41; (*tim<sup>KO</sup>*): 33.

# Figure 1

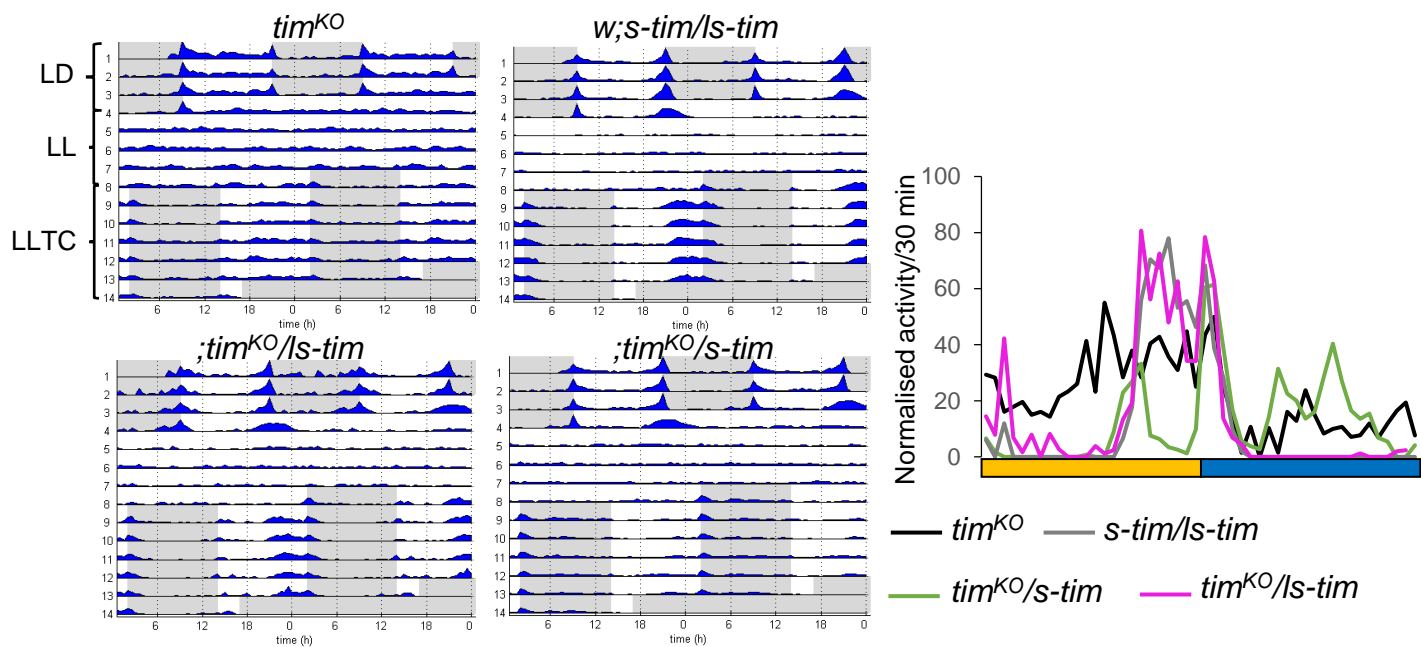
**A**



**B**

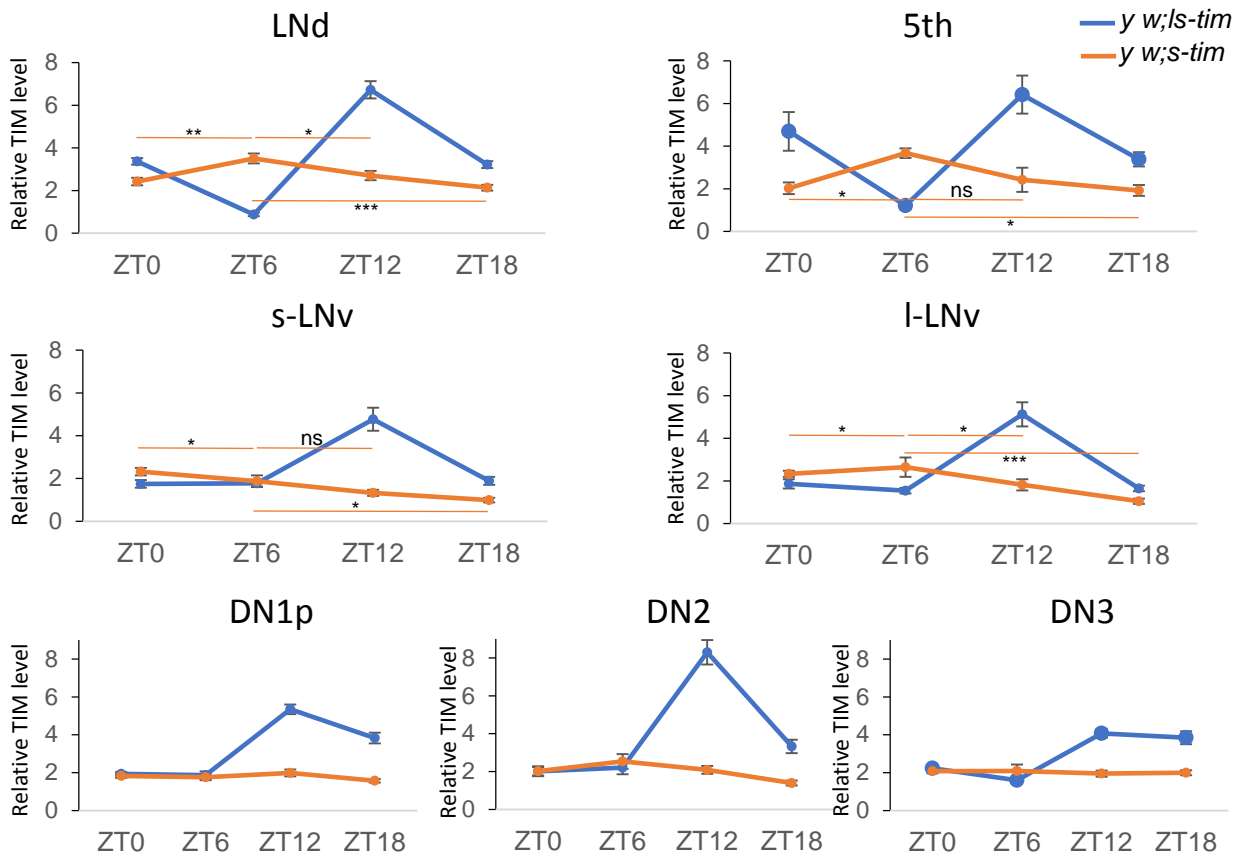


**C**

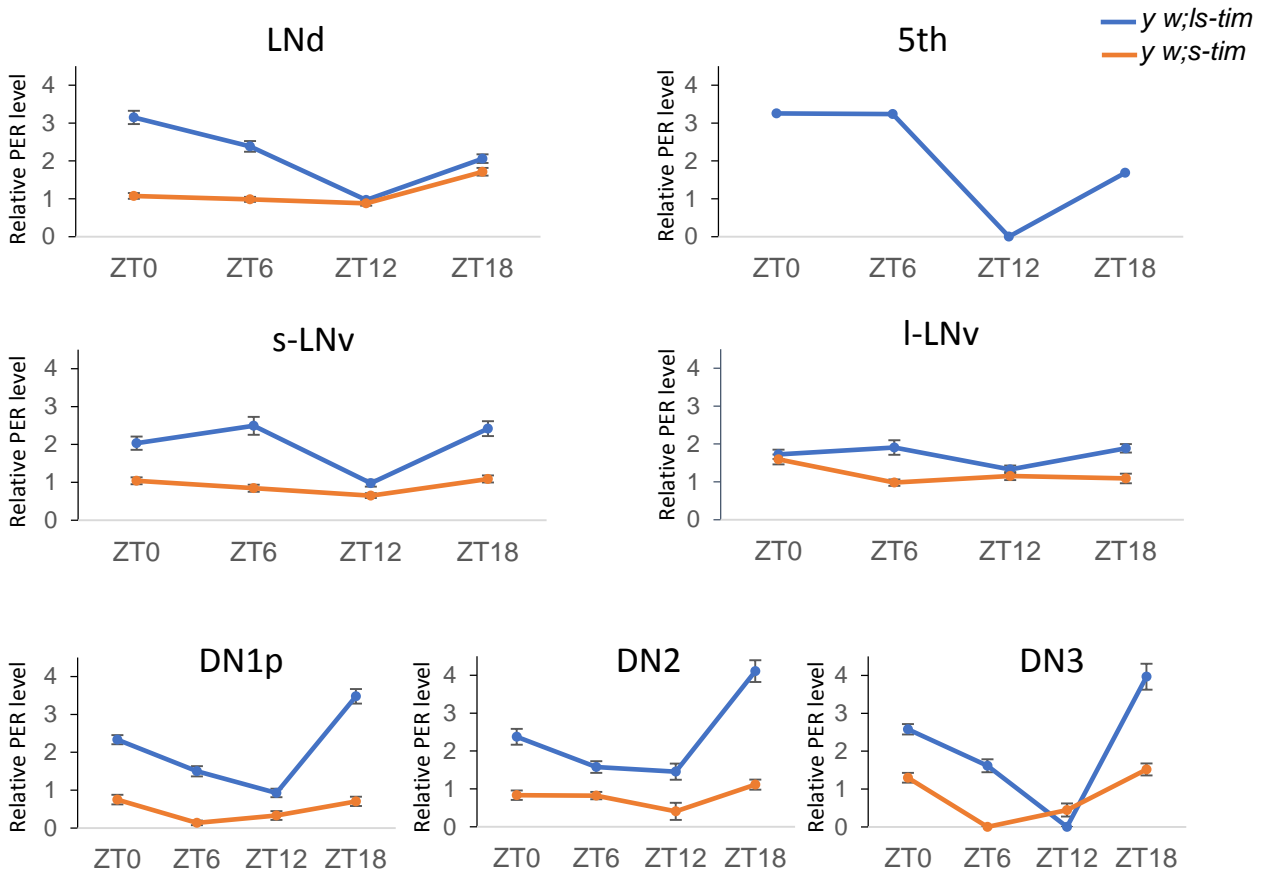


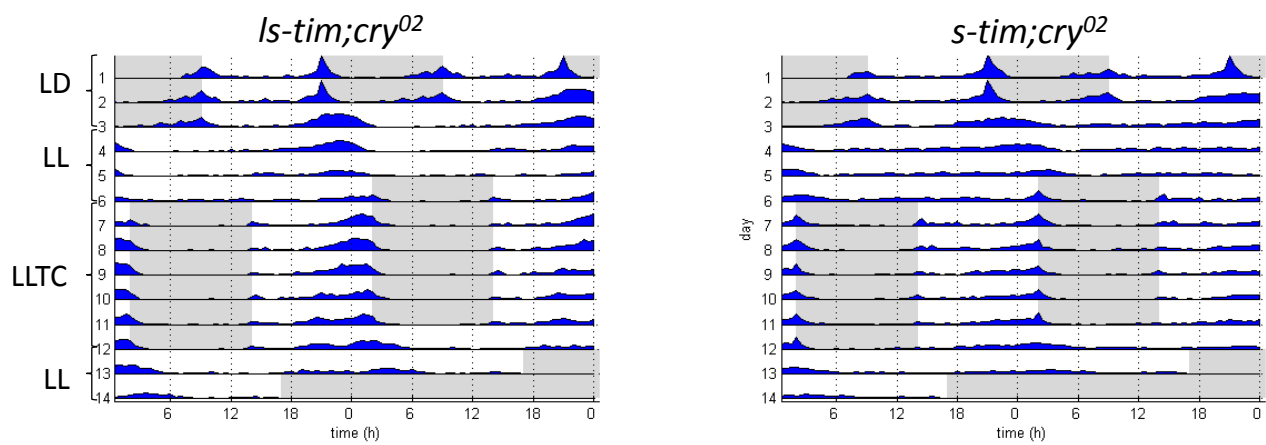
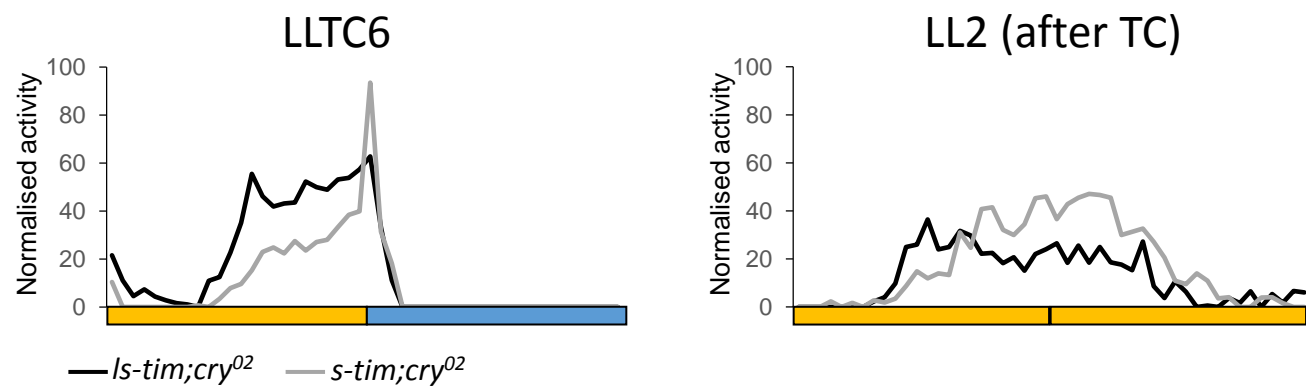
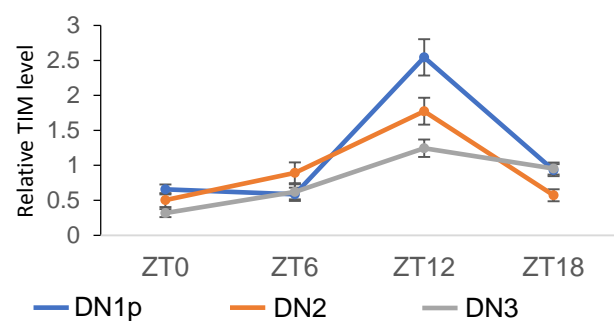
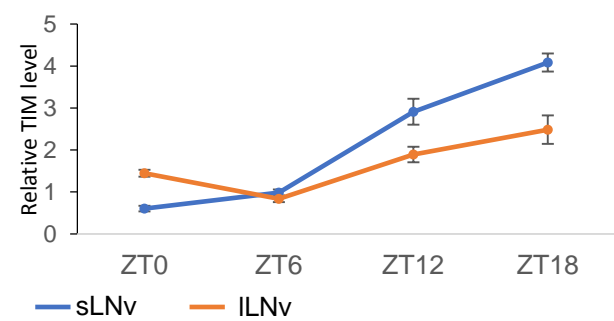
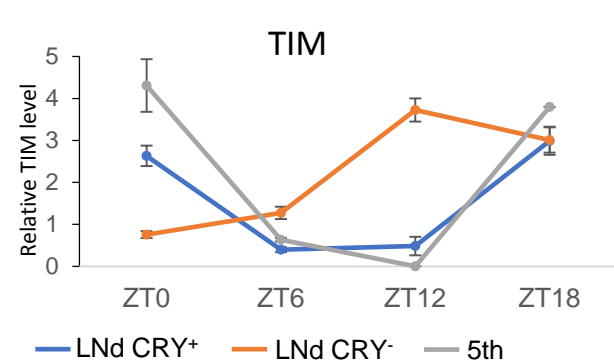
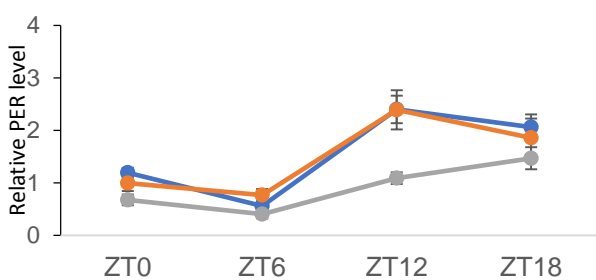
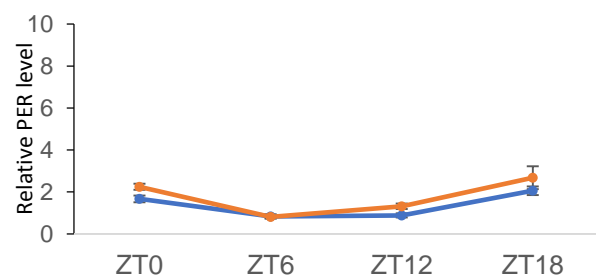
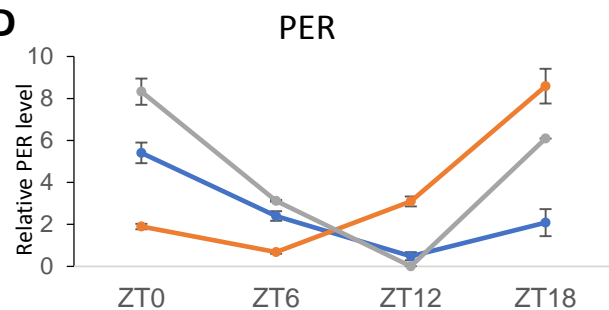
# Figure 2

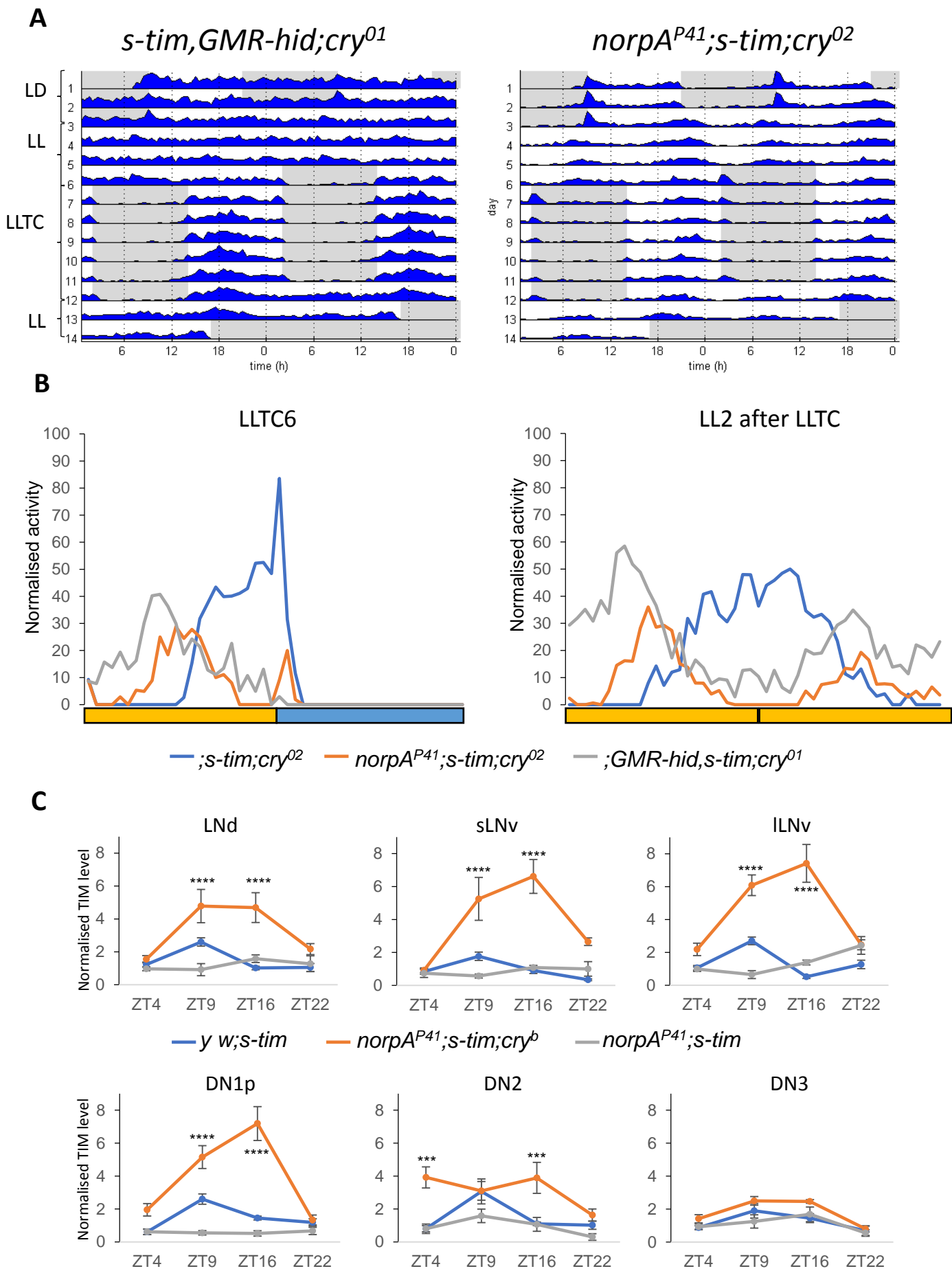
**A**



**B**

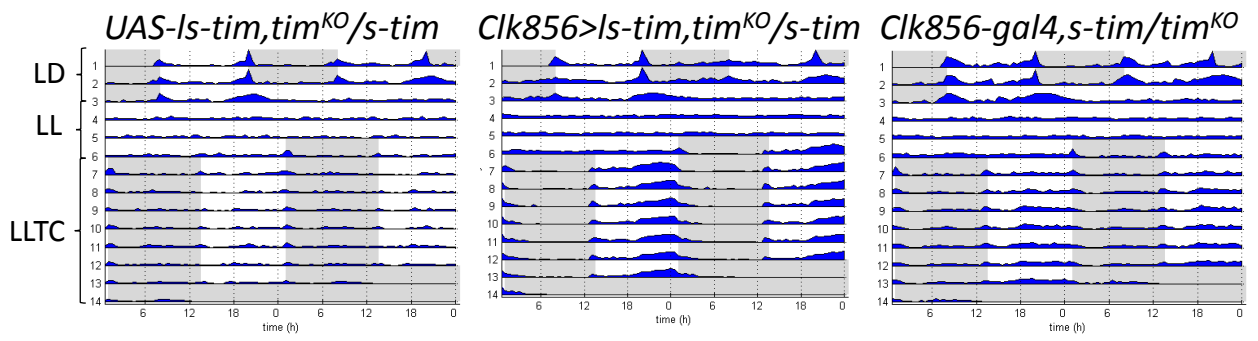


**Figure 3****A****B****C****D**

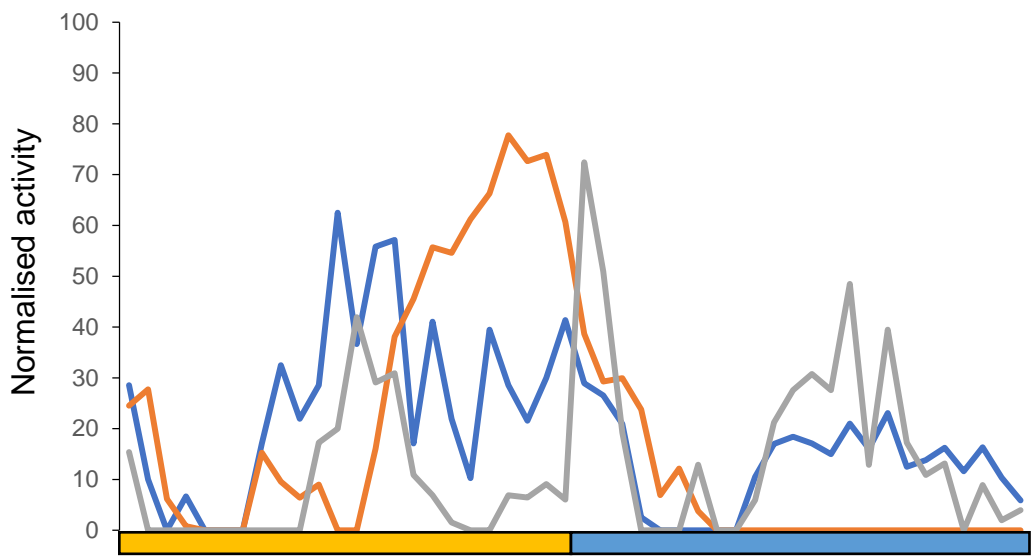
**Figure 4**

**Figure 5**

**A**



**B**

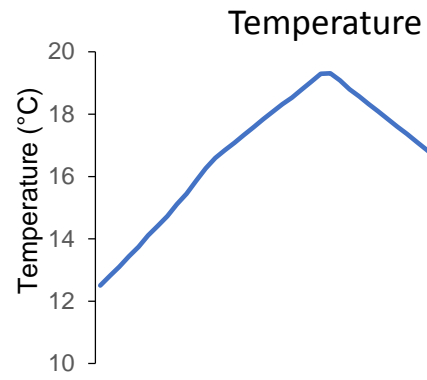
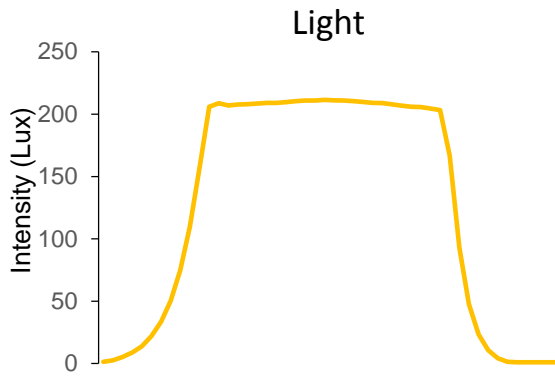
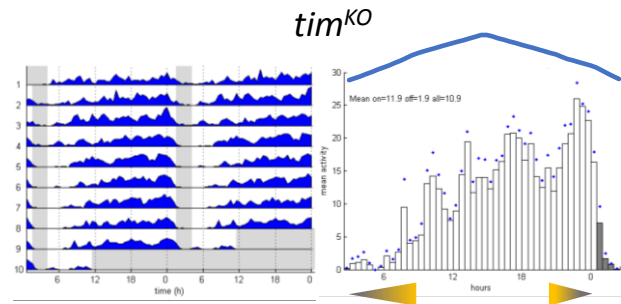
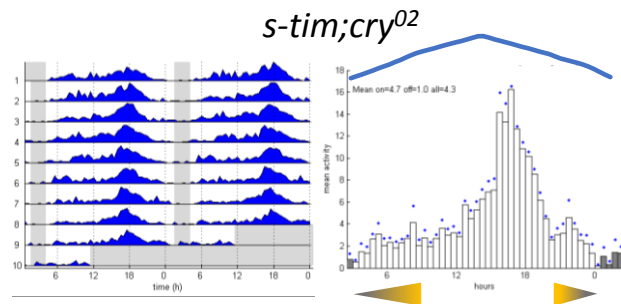
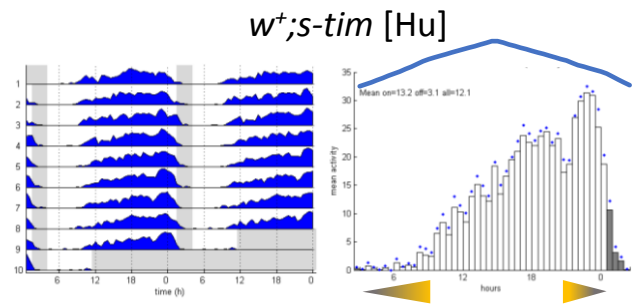
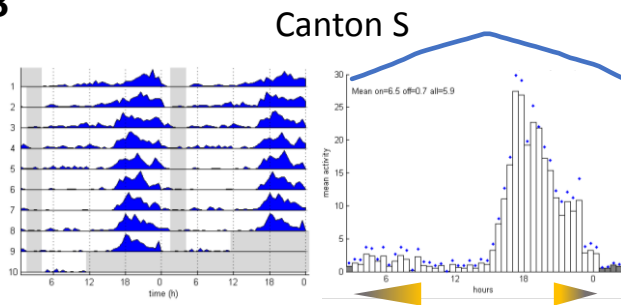


—; *Clk856-Gal4,s-tim/tim<sup>KO</sup>*

— *Clk856>Is-tim,s-tim/tim<sup>KO</sup>*

— ; *UAS-Is-tim,s-tim/tim<sup>KO</sup>*



**Figure 6****A****B****C**