

# 1 **Sterols as dietary markers for *Drosophila melanogaster***

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## 19 **Author contributions**

20 Experiments design: OK, EP, MB, AS; methods development: OK, SS; experimental work:

21 OK, EP; materials and reagents: EF, TW; data analysis: OK; data interpretation: OK, EP, MB,

22 AS; manuscript preparation: OK, EP, MB, AS; funding: MB, AS

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25

26 **Abstract**

27 During cold acclimation fruit flies switch their feeding from yeast to plant food, however there  
28 are no robust markers to monitor it in the wild. *Drosophila melanogaster* is a sterol auxotroph  
29 and relies on dietary sterols to produce lipid membranes, lipoproteins and molting hormones.  
30 We employed shotgun lipidomics to quantify eight major food sterols in total extracts of heads,  
31 female and male genital tracts of adult flies. We found that their sterol composition is dynamic  
32 and reflective of flies diet in an organ-specific manner. Season-dependent changes observed in  
33 the organs of wild-living flies suggested that the molar ratio between yeast (ergosterol,  
34 zymosterol) and plant (sitosterol, stigmasterol) sterols is a quantifiable, generic and  
35 unequivocal marker of their feeding behavior, including cold acclimation. It provides  
36 technically simpler and more contrast readout compared to the full lipidome analysis and is  
37 suitable for ecological and environmental population-based studies.

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## 41 **Introduction**

42

43 *Drosophila melanogaster* (*Dm*) is an established model to study dietary and environmental  
44 impact on lipid homeostasis and development [1]. Although in the wild *Dm* is believed to feed  
45 on yeasts grown on rotten fruits and plants, it can also develop on a variety of foods, including  
46 an artificially delipidated diet supplemented with sterols [2]. *Dm* lacks  $\Delta$ -6 and  $\Delta$ -5 desaturases  
47 [3] and can only produce short- to medium-chain fatty acids comprising not more than one  
48 double bond [4]. However, *Dm* also makes use of dietary lipids with polyunsaturated fatty acid  
49 moieties (*e.g.* unsaturated triacylglycerols from plant oil) and incorporate them into its own  
50 lipids [5,6]. Manipulating the composition of laboratory diets helps to produce larvae and adult  
51 flies with a varying degree of unsaturation of their glycerol- and glycerophospholipids and study  
52 their impact on metabolism and physiology. However, changes in lipids unsaturation span  
53 many lipid classes in a tissue-dependent manner and therefore a snapshot of the full-lipidome  
54 profile could hardly serve as a robust marker of shifting dietary preference.

55 Like other arthropods, *Drosophila* is a sterol auxotroph: it exclusively relies on dietary  
56 sterols to build biological membranes, lipoproteins, and to produce molting hormones [7]. Each  
57 common dietary component supplies flies with unique sterols: a commonly used yeast food  
58 (YF) is enriched in ergosterol (Erg); plant food (PF) contains phytosterols *e.g.* sitosterol (Sit),  
59 campesterol (Cam) or stigmasterol (Sti), while animal components supply cholesterol (Cho)  
60 (Figure 1). We hypothesized that, in comparison to the full lipidome composition, sterol  
61 composition could be a more specific dietary marker supporting ecological and nutritional  
62 studies also in wild-living animals.

63 Our recent study showed that switching from yeast to plant diet increased flies survival  
64 at low temperatures by preserving the fluidity of their biological membranes [6]. Depending  
65 on their chemical structure, sterols are differently contributing to membranes organization and

66 fluidity [8–10]. However, these findings mostly rely on either artificial membrane vesicles or  
67 molecular dynamics calculations. It is unclear if lipidomic changes observed in the laboratory  
68 using compositionally defined foods and genetically homogeneous population of flies also play  
69 a role in the wild. It remains uncertain if the sterol composition is dynamic and reflects changes  
70 in adult flies diet that occurred within a relatively short time span. How fast are sterols  
71 exchanged and if the exchange rates is organ-specific? What sterols are preferentially  
72 incorporated by wild-living flies feeding on diverse nutrients? And, last but not least, if sterol  
73 composition follows cold acclimation in the wild?

74 To answer these and other important question we developed a simple and robust  
75 shotgun lipidomics method for the absolute (molar) quantification of 8 major dietary sterols in  
76 individual fly organs and monitored the dynamics of sterol exchange in adult flies reared on  
77 laboratory foods and collected in the wild.

78

## 79 **Results and Discussion**

80

### 81 **Sterols quantification by shotgun lipidomics**

82

83 We previously quantified the full lipidome (including 8 major sterols) of 5 fly organs by  
84 shotgun profiling [5]. To this end, total lipid extracts were split into two aliquots. One aliquot  
85 was used for quantifying glycerol-, glycerophospho- and sphingolipids. Another aliquot was  
86 subjected to one-step sulfation by the sulfur trioxide - pyridine complex [5,11] followed by  
87 shotgun quantification of derivatized sterols. Sulfation increased the sensitivity and equalized  
88 the mass spectrometer response towards structurally different sterols. In this way, the full sterol  
89 complement could be quantified using a single internal standard (typically deuterated Cho)  
90 after minor adjustment of peaks abundance by individual response factors. However, despite  
91 extensive clean-up of reaction mixtures, sterols sulfation severely affected spraying stability

92 and the method suffered from poor batch-to-batch reproducibility [12]. Also, in meantime,  
93 isotopically labeled standards of many relevant sterols have become available hence rendering  
94 the instrument response harmonization unnecessary. Therefore, instead of sulfation, we treated  
95 sterols with acetyl chloride according to Liebisch *et al.* [13], detected acetylsterols as  
96  $[M+NH_4]^+$  or  $[M+H]^+$  molecular ions, subjected them to HCD FT MS/MS and quantified using  
97 fragment ions produced by neutral loss of the acetyl group (Figure 1).

98 Altogether, we aimed at quantifying 8 sterols that are common to flies reared on yeast  
99 and plant laboratory foods (Figure 1) [5]. Out of those, isotopically labeled standards were  
100 available for 6 sterols, however not for the major fungi sterol Erg and the common phytosterol  
101 brassicasterol (Bra).

102 To quantify ergosterol, we cultivated prototrophic yeast strain W303 Y3358 on  $^{13}C_6$ -  
103 glucose and produced fully  $^{13}C$ -labeled ergosterol [14]. In this way, we obtained a stock  
104 solution of 99% isotopically labeled  $^{13}C$ -ergosterol and then determined its molar concentration  
105 using a calibration plot made with unlabeled Erg standard (see Supplementary figure 1).

106 Since Bra and Sti only differ by one methyl group and also share the location of both  
107 double bonds we tested if D<sub>6</sub>-stigmasterol could also be used for quantifying Bra. Calibration  
108 plots of Bra and Erg covered a linear dynamic range of three orders of magnitude (0.16 to 100  
109  $\mu M$ ) and were not affected by a surrogate lipid matrix (total lipid extract of bovine liver)  
110 (Supplementary Figure 1).

111 To quantify fly sterols we used 2/3 of a lipid material extracted from 5 heads or 5 genital  
112 tracts. The remaining extract was used for shotgun quantification of glycerol- and  
113 glycerophospholipids and ceramides using the same mass spectrometry platform and software  
114 [15–18].

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119 **Sterols in adult flies organs are exchangeable with dietary sterols**

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121 Flies incorporate sterols while growing [5], yet are they able to exchange sterols in adulthood  
122 in a fully-formed body? We monitored the sterol exchange in adult flies (5-7 days after  
123 eclosion) by swapping their diets from YF to PF and, in a separate series of experiments, from  
124 PF to YF (Figure 2).

125 Flies reared on normal food (NF) containing both yeast and plant components were  
126 allowed to lay eggs on an apple juice agar plate overnight. Eggs were collected, bleached and  
127 developed to 1<sup>st</sup> instar larvae on a fresh plate within one day. Larvae were collected and reared  
128 on either YF or PF till adulthood. Five to seven days after eclosion, flies were transferred to  
129 another food (PF or YF, respectively) and kept until the indicated time point (days 0, 7 and 14)  
130 (Figure 2). Heads (H), male and female genital tracts (mGT and fGT, respectively) were  
131 dissected and sterols quantified by shotgun mass spectrometry. We chose to analyze H and m/f  
132 GT to contrast the organ-dependent sterol exchange rates within the same adult animal. We  
133 reasoned that continuous sperm or eggs production in GT would require higher intake of dietary  
134 sterols compared to metabolically and morphologically conserved tissues of the fly head. At  
135 the same time, the accurate dissection of specific organs (rather than analyzing whole flies)  
136 alleviated massive compositional biases due to food lipids accumulated in the gut or fat body.

137 At the start (day 0) the sterol composition of H, fGT and mGT resembled the  
138 composition of nutrient sterols: Erg and Sit were major sterols in both foods and flies (Figure  
139 3). However, relatively low abundant Erg biosynthesis precursor Zym (in flies reared on YF;  
140 for clarity further termed as YF-flies) and Cam (in PF-flies) were particularly enriched in the  
141 GTs, while at the same time PF-flies markedly rejected Sti (Figure 3). Most likely, Sit (in YF-

142 flies) and Erg (in PF-flies) were detectable at the very low levels because of their carry-over  
143 from the NF that contained both yeast and plant material.

144 Hence, the composition of fly tissues directly followed the composition of dietary  
145 sterols, yet flies showed marked preferences towards several minor sterols. However, the  
146 relationship between the sterol abundance in food and in tissues is not direct. H and mGT of  
147 both YF- and PF- flies contained similar amount of sterols (in pmol per organ), despite YF  
148 contained 3 times more total sterols than PF (data not shown).

149 On the starting day prior the food swap, fGT of YF-flies contained *ca* 4-fold more  
150 sterols compared to PF-flies (Figure 4A) and 7-fold more membrane lipids (GPL and PE-Cer).  
151 This corroborated with *ca*.7-fold higher content of eggs in fGT of YF-flies that were not  
152 removed during dissection. In YF-flies both the number of eggs per ovary and the ovary area  
153 were higher than in PF-flies (Supplementary figure 2) leading to elevated fertility [6].

154 Within two weeks after swapping the diets (YF to PF and PF to YF), the total sterol  
155 content reached the same level as was observed in the flies reared on the substituting food.  
156 However, the sterol composition was very different. After two weeks on PF (after swapping  
157 YF to PF) only *ca* 35 mol% of Erg was replaced by phytosterol(s). At the same time, in the  
158 reversed direction (swapping PF to YF) Erg content increased from zero up to 60 mol% along  
159 with markedly strong depletion of both Sit and Cam.

160 A similar trend was observed in mGT: *ca* 30 mol% of Erg was replaced by phytosterols  
161 when changing YF to PF. However, in contrast to fGT, Erg did not replace Sit and Cam in the  
162 reversed (PF to YF) experiment.

163 This prompted a few interim conclusions regarding the completeness and rate of sterol  
164 exchange. Firstly, sterols are exchanged in adult flies in a tissue and sex-dependent manner at  
165 the days to weeks pace. Secondly, head sterols weakly responded to altered diets and likely  
166 reflected the composition of foods during animal growth. Thirdly, fGT sterols strongly

167 responded to the yeast food and rapidly increased the content of Erg. In fGT and mGT sterols  
168 profiles responded to the plant component with approximately the same magnitude, but mGT  
169 was non-responsive to YF.

170

### 171 **Seasonal temperature affects the sterol composition of wild-living flies**

172

173 In *Dm* cold acclimation is improved by consuming plant foods enriched with TG comprising  
174 unsaturated fatty acids [6]. Since sterol composition of tissues of adult flies is food-specific  
175 (Figure 3) and also dynamic (Figure 4), we reasoned that it could also reflect temperature-  
176 dependent dietary preferences of wild-living flies.

177 Wild-living adult *Dm* animals were collected in Meißen and Pirna areas (Saxony,  
178 Germany) at three different times of the year (beginning and end of August 2017 and February  
179 2019) and their lipidomes, including sterols, were quantified by shotgun lipidomics. The sterol  
180 composition of H, fGT and mGT was correlated with the mean temperature within the time  
181 period of two weeks prior collection (Figure 5A). Two mean temperatures (21.6°C and 18.3°C)  
182 were relatively close and we thought that corresponding fly lipidomes should reflect local  
183 variations of the wild diets, while the third (winter) collection was made at significantly lower  
184 temperature of 7.9°C.

185 Sterol compositions of the three fly organs indicated that, independent of temperatures,  
186 flies were feeding on mixed diets containing comparable fractions of plant and yeast  
187 components. Interestingly, they also contained a sizable fraction of cholesterol suggesting that  
188 flies made occasional use of foods of mammalian origin [19]. Expectantly, the sterol  
189 composition of beginning and end of August collections was similar. However, the winter flies  
190 contained approximately 50% less Erg and 50% more of Sit, compared to the summer flies,



191 suggesting the seasonal dietary shift from yeast to plant related foods occurs in the wild (Figure  
192 5B-D).

193 Interestingly, that profiles of major glycerophospholipids (PE, PC) in H and mGT of  
194 wild living animals only slightly changed with temperature. At the same time, fGT showed a  
195 clear trend toward increasing the unsaturation at lower temperature. The fly lipidome contained  
196 a substantial fraction of PC/PE species with unsaturated fatty acid moieties already at the normal  
197 (21.6°C and 18.3°C) temperature. This is not surprising since other common wild living fungi  
198 *e.g. Yarrowia lipolytica* or *Pichia pastoris* could supply both ergosterol and polyunsaturated  
199 fatty acids [20–23].

200 Therefore, adjusting the sterol composition via dietary shift is another critical factor  
201 required for cold acclimation. It is clearly detectable also in organs whose  
202 glycerophospholipids are not strongly responding to temperature.

203

## 204 **Conclusions and perspectives**

205 Among common model organisms, *Dm* is uniquely capable of building fully functional  
206 biological membranes using many dietary sterols of diverse origin and chemical structure,  
207 including mammalian sterol cholesterol, yeast ergosterol or plant sitosterol and stigmasterol,  
208 among several others. However, the biological significance and molecular basis of this  
209 structural versatility is poorly understood. We demonstrated that in mature organs of adult flies  
210 sterols were still exchangeable with food sterols. Furthermore, adjusting the sterols  
211 composition by altering the diet is an important part of the cold acclimation machinery that, at  
212 least in a few organs, functions independently of regulating membranes fluidity by changing  
213 the unsaturation of glycerophospholipids. Chol and Cam are having similar membrane ordering  
214 capacity, whereas Sit is less ordering and Sti is the least ordering from common fly sterols [8].  
215 Hence the increase of sitosterol with concomitant depletion of (mostly) ergosterol could increase

216 the membrane fluidity and also contribute to cold acclimation even if unsaturated plant lipids  
217 (practically, oil-rich seeds) are not available.

218 In the future, it would be interesting to elucidate the consequences of sterols exchange  
219 in a broader *omics* context. In particular, an important question is if sterols could differently  
220 regulate membrane proteins/protein complexes. Together with maintaining membrane fluidity,  
221 this could be another molecular reason for remarkable tolerance of flies to the structural  
222 diversity of dietary sterols.

223

224

225 **Material and methods:**

226 **Fly stocks**

227 *OregonR* stocks (#5; available from Bloomington center) were kept at 20-22°C on normal food  
228 (per liter: 22g sugar beet, 80g malt extract, 18g yeasts, 10g soy peptone, 80g cornmeal, 20g  
229 Glucose, 7g agar, 1.5g nipagin).

230

231 **Fly food recipes**

232 Plant food (PF; calculated calories = 831kcal/L) per liter: 30g sugar beet, 45g malt extract,  
233 2mL cold-pressed sunflower oil, 20g soy peptone, 55g cornmeal, 75g glucose, 0.7g agar, 1.5g  
234 nipagin). Yeast food (YF; calculated calories = 793 kcal/L) per liter: 20g yeast extract (Sigma  
235 Aldrich Y1625), 20g soy peptone (ROTH 2365.3) , 60g glucose (ROTH X997.3), 30g sucrose,  
236 80g yeasts, 10g agar (BioFroxx 1182GR500), 4g nipagin (ROTH 3646.2).

237

238 **Sterol swapping experiments**

239 Embryos collected after 24h on apple-juice plates (per liter: 250mL apple-juice, 15g agar, 4g  
240 nipagin) were washed, bleached for 45sec and kept for 24h at 20-22°C on starvation plates (per  
241 liter: 250mL apple-juice, 100g glucose, 15g agar, 4g nipagin). The first-instar larvae were  
242 transferred from the starvation plates to vials containing YF or PF and kept at 19.5-20°C in a  
243 12h/12h dark/light cycle. Once larvae reared on YF or PF reach adulthood, 5-7 days-old flies  
244 were dissected (day 0). The remaining YF- and PF-fed flies were transferred to PF and YF,  
245 respectively. Seven and 14 days after the food swap, adults were dissected (day 7 and day 14,  
246 respectively).

247 The adult flies were dissected in cold Phosphate-Buffered Solution (1x PBS) to remove the  
248 head and the genital tract, transferred into isopropanol on ice, snap-frozen in liquid nitrogen  
249 and stored at -80°C. For each time points and each sample, triplicates have been performed.

250 Samples: heads (per sample: 5; male: female ratio = 2:3); male genital tracts (male gt; per  
251 sample: 5); female genital tracts (female gt; per sample: 5).

252

### 253 **Standards for lipid quantification**

254 Synthetic lipid standards and Erg were purchased from Avanti Polar Lipids, Inc. (Alabaster,  
255 USA), Sigma Aldrich (Steinheim, DE) and Toronto Research Chemicals (Toronto, CA). <sup>13</sup>C  
256 uniformly labeled glucose was purchased from Euriso-top (Saint Aubin, FR) and yeast nitrogen  
257 base without amino acids from Difco (LE Pont de Claix, FR). All used solvents were of at least  
258 HPLC grade. Stocks of internal standards were stored in glass ampoules at -20°C until used  
259 for the preparation of internal standard mix in 10:3 MTBE/MeOH. 700 µl internal standard  
260 mix contained: 356 pmol Cholesterol D<sub>7</sub>, 224 pmol Zymosterol D<sub>5</sub>, 215 pmol Campesterol D<sub>6</sub>,  
261 207 pmol Sitosterol D<sub>6</sub>, 201 pmol Lanosterol D<sub>6</sub>, 418 pmol Stigmasterol D<sub>6</sub>, 233 pmol  
262 Desmosterol D<sub>6</sub>, 196 pmol <sup>13</sup>C Ergosterol, 417 pmol 50:0 TG D<sub>5</sub>, 116 pmol 34:0 DG D<sub>5</sub>, 220  
263 pmol 25:0 PC, 77 pmol LPC, 107 pmol 25:0 PS, 354 pmol 25:0 PE, 85 pmol 13:0 LPE, 96  
264 pmol 25:0 PI, 109 pmol 25:0 PG, 145 pmol 30:1 Cer, 91 pmol 25:0 PA, 45 pmol 13:0 LPA,  
265 178 pmol 29:1 CerPE, 38 pmol 13:0 LPI, 54 pmol 56:4 CL, 59 pmol 13:0 LPS, 75 pmol 13:0  
266 LPG.

267 <sup>13</sup>C uniformly labeled Erg was produced in the prototrophic yeast strain W303 Y3358. A single  
268 colony was inoculated in 25 ml sterile filtered synthetic defined medium (20 g/l glucose, 6.7  
269 g/l yeast nitrogen base without amino acids). Yeast was incubated for 21 h at 30°C to reach  
270 stationary phase and then pelleted by centrifugation (10 min, 4000 g). The medium was  
271 removed and the pellet was washed twice with 1 ml H<sub>2</sub>O. The corresponding pellet was split  
272 into 6 samples. These pellets were reconstituted in 300 µl isopropanol (IPA) each and  
273 homogenized with 0.5 mm zirconia beads on a tissuelyser II for 20 min at 30 Hz. The dried  
274 homogenates were saponified with 1 ml 3% KOH in methanol for 2 h at 90°C each. Ergosterol

275 was extracted twice with 2 ml hexane and 1 ml H<sub>2</sub>O and the combined organic phases from all  
276 samples were evaporated. Finally, Erg was reconstituted in 1 ml MeOH and stored at -20 C.  
277 <sup>13</sup>C-ergosterol was quantified by adding a known amount of <sup>12</sup>C-ergosterol and performing  
278 parallel reaction monitoring.

279

### 280 **Lipid extraction and quantification by shotgun mass spectrometry**

281 5 Dm heads (fixed ratio of 2 male heads and 3 female heads) or 5 genital tracts of corresponding  
282 sex were homogenized with 1 mm zirconia beads in a cooled tissuelyzer for 2 x 5 min at 30 Hz  
283 in 200 µl IPA. The homogenate was evaporated in a vacuum desiccator to complete dryness.  
284 For YF and PF, 200 – 300 mg wet weight were homogenized in 600 µl IPA with 1 mm zirconia  
285 beads in a cooled tissuelyzer for 20 min at 30 Hz. An aliquot corresponding to 4 mg food wet  
286 weight was used for lipid extraction. All samples were extracted according to [24]. In brief,  
287 700 µl internal standard mix in 10:3 MTBE/MeOH was added to each sample and vortexed for  
288 1 h at 4°C. After the addition of 140 µl H<sub>2</sub>O, samples were vortexed for another 15 min. Phase  
289 separation was induced by centrifugation at 13200 rpm for 15 min. The organic phase was  
290 transferred to a glass vial and evaporated. Samples were reconstituted in 300 µl 1:2  
291 MeOH/CHCl<sub>3</sub>. 100 µl were transferred to a new vial and used for lipidome analysis. To  
292 quantify sterols 200 µl of lipid extract were evaporated and acetylated with 300 µl 2:1  
293 CHCl<sub>3</sub>/acetyl chloride for 1 h at room temperature (modified from Liebisch et al., 2006). After  
294 evaporation sterol samples were reconstituted in 200 µl 4:2:1 IPA/MeOH/CHCl<sub>3</sub> + 7.5 mM  
295 ammonium formate (spray solution). For sterol measurements, samples were 1:5 diluted with  
296 spray solution. For lipidome measurements, samples were 1:10 diluted with spray solution.

297 Mass spectrometric analysis was performed on a Q Exactive instrument (Thermo  
298 Fischer Scientific, Bremen, DE) equipped with a robotic nanoflow ion source TriVersa  
299 NanoMate (Advion BioSciences, Ithaca, USA) using nanoelectrospray chips with a diameter

300 of 4.1  $\mu\text{m}$ . The ion source was controlled by the Chipsoft 8.3.1 software (Advion BioSciences).  
301 Ionization voltage was + 0.96 kV in positive and – 0.96 kV in negative mode; backpressure  
302 was set at 1.25 psi in both modes. Samples were analyzed by polarity switching [25]. The  
303 temperature of the ion transfer capillary was 200 °C; S-lens RF level was set to 50%. All  
304 samples were analyzed for 10 min. FT MS spectra were acquired within the range of  $m/z$  400–  
305 1000 from 0 min to 0.2 min in positive and within the range of  $m/z$  350–1000 from 5.2 min to  
306 5.4 min in negative mode at the mass resolution of  $R\ m/z\ 200 = 140000$ ; automated gain control  
307 (AGC) of  $3 \times 10^6$  and with the maximal injection time of 3000 ms. *t*-SIM in positive (0.2 to 5  
308 min) and negative (5.4 to 10 min) mode was acquired with  $R\ m/z\ 200 = 140000$ ; automated  
309 gain control of  $5 \times 10^4$ ; maximum injection time of 650 ms; isolation window of 20 Th and  
310 scan range of  $m/z$  400 to 1000 in positive and  $m/z$  350 to 1000 in negative mode, respectively.  
311 The inclusion list of masses targeted in *t*-SIM analyses started at  $m/z$  355 in negative and  $m/z$   
312 405 in positive ion mode and other masses were computed by adding 10 Th increment (i.e.  $m/z$   
313 355, 365, 375, ...) up to  $m/z$  1005. Acetylated sterols were quantified by parallel reaction  
314 monitoring (PRM) FT MS/MS in an additional measurement. FT MS spectra within the range  
315 of  $m/z$  350-1000 were acquired from 0 min to 0.2 min and *t*-SIM ranging from  $m/z$  350 to 500  
316 were acquired from 0.2 min to 4 min with the same settings as described above. PRM spectra  
317 were acquired from 4 min to 10 min. For PRM micro scans were set to 1, isolation window to  
318 0.8 Da, normalized collision energy to 12.5%, AGC to  $5 \times 10^4$  and maximum injection time to  
319 3000 ms. All spectra were pre-processed using repetition rate filtering software PeakStrainer  
320 [26] and stitched together by an in-house developed script [17]. Lipids were identified by  
321 LipidXplorer software [27]. Molecular Fragmentation Query Language (MFQL) queries were  
322 compiled for acetylated sterols, PA, LPA PC, PC O-, LPC, LPC O-, PE, PE O-, LPE, PI, LPI,  
323 PS, LPS, PG, LPG, CL, CerPE, Cer, TG, DG lipid classes. The identification relied on  
324 accurately determined intact lipid masses (mass accuracy better than 5 ppm). Lipids were

325 quantified by comparing the isotopically corrected abundances of their molecular ions with the  
326 abundances of internal standards of the same lipid class. For acetylated sterols, the specific  
327 fragment (loss of acetyl group) was used for quantification.

328

329

### 330 **Acknowledgments**

331 We are greatly indebted to our late colleague Dr. Suzanne Eaton who should have been a rightful  
332 co-authors of this manuscript. Dr. Eaton inspired us to work on the lipidomics of temperature  
333 acclimation and enormously contributed to designing and organizing the study. Due to a tragic  
334 loss of life she has never got a chance to see the results she envisioned.

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340

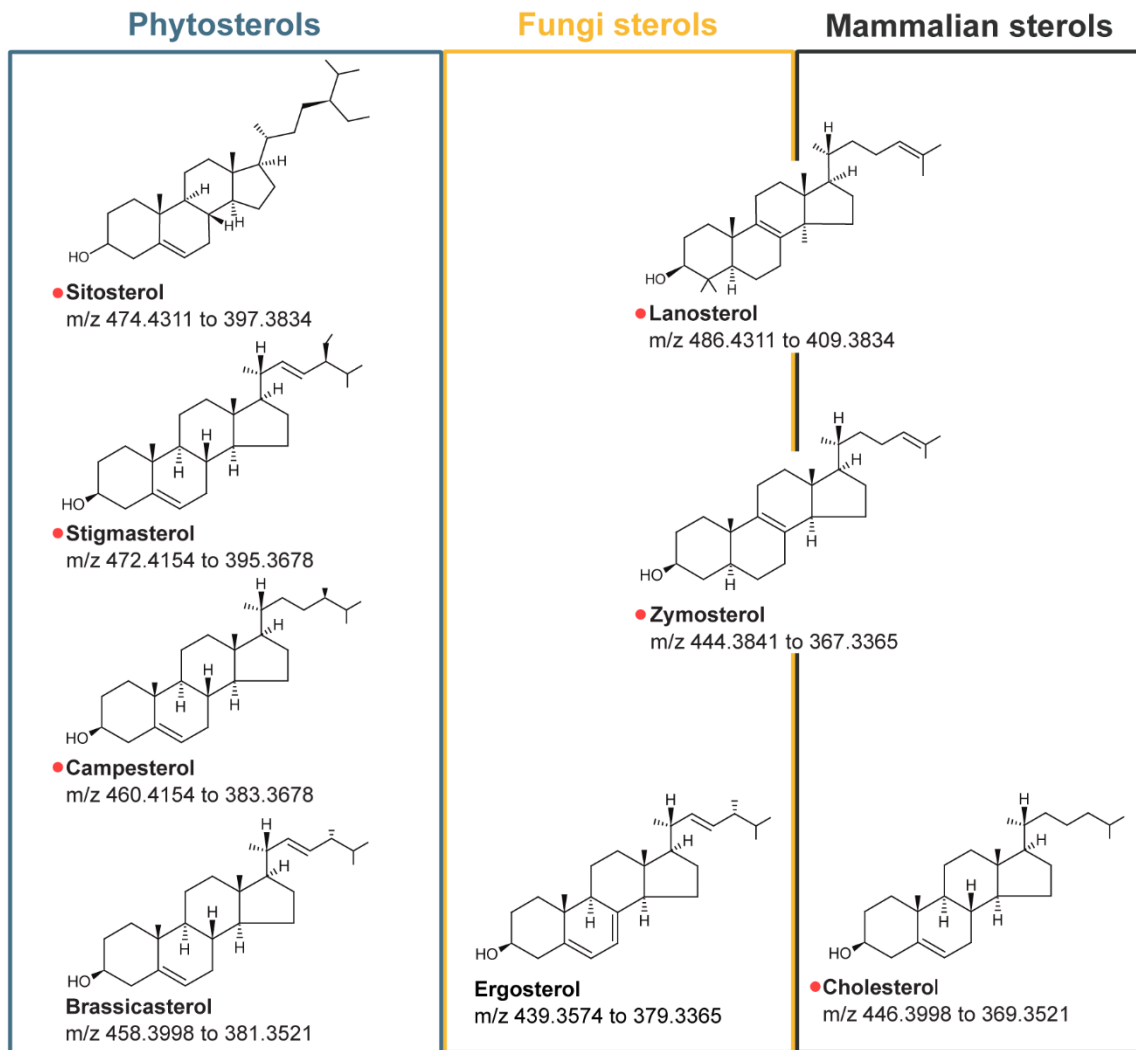
### 341 **Conflict of interest**

342 The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

343

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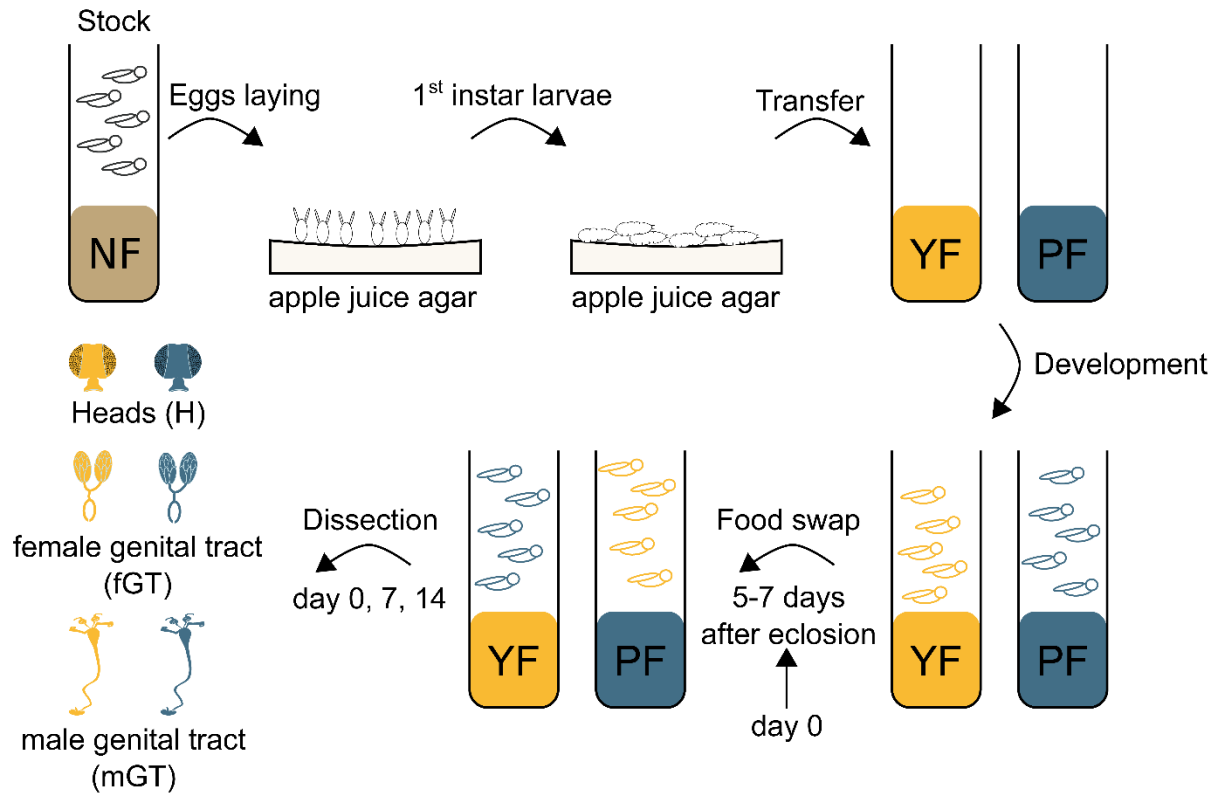
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346

347 **Figure 1.** Common sterols found in fly tissues and organs [5] and grouped according to their  
 348 organismal origin. Sit: sitosterol; Sti: stigmasterol; Cam: campesterol; Bra: brassicasterol; Lan:  
 349 lanosterol; Zym: zymosterol; Erg: ergosterol and Cho: cholesterol. The position of Lan and  
 350 Zym indicates that they are biosynthetic precursors of both Erg and Chol. SRM mass transitions  
 351 used for quantifying sterols by HCD FT MS/MS is shown below their structures. Sterols with  
 352 available deuterated standards are indicated by red dots.  
 353





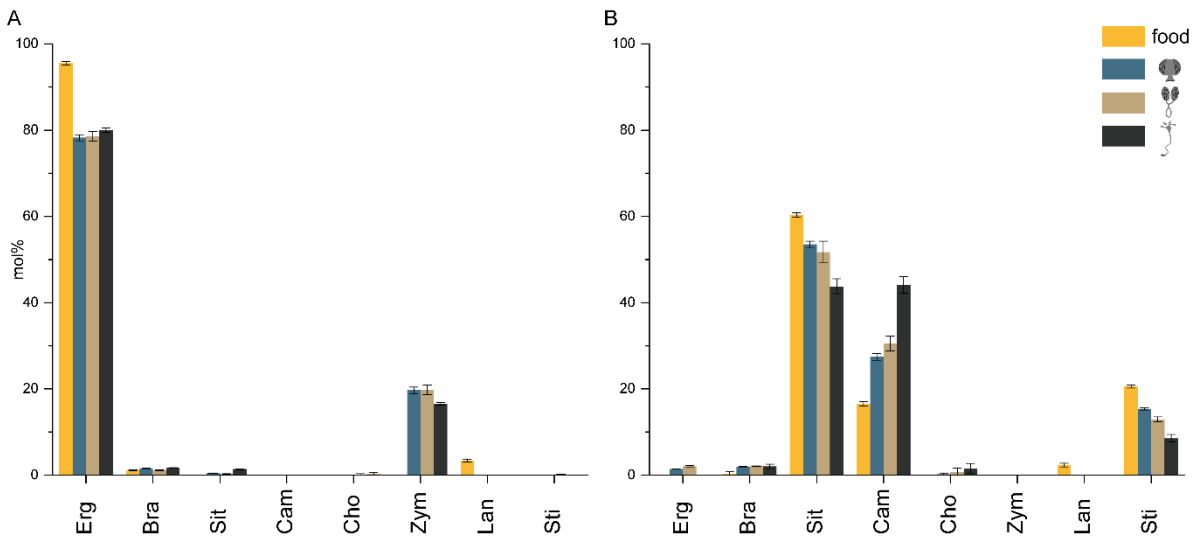
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355 **Figure 2.** Workflow of food swapping experiments.

356

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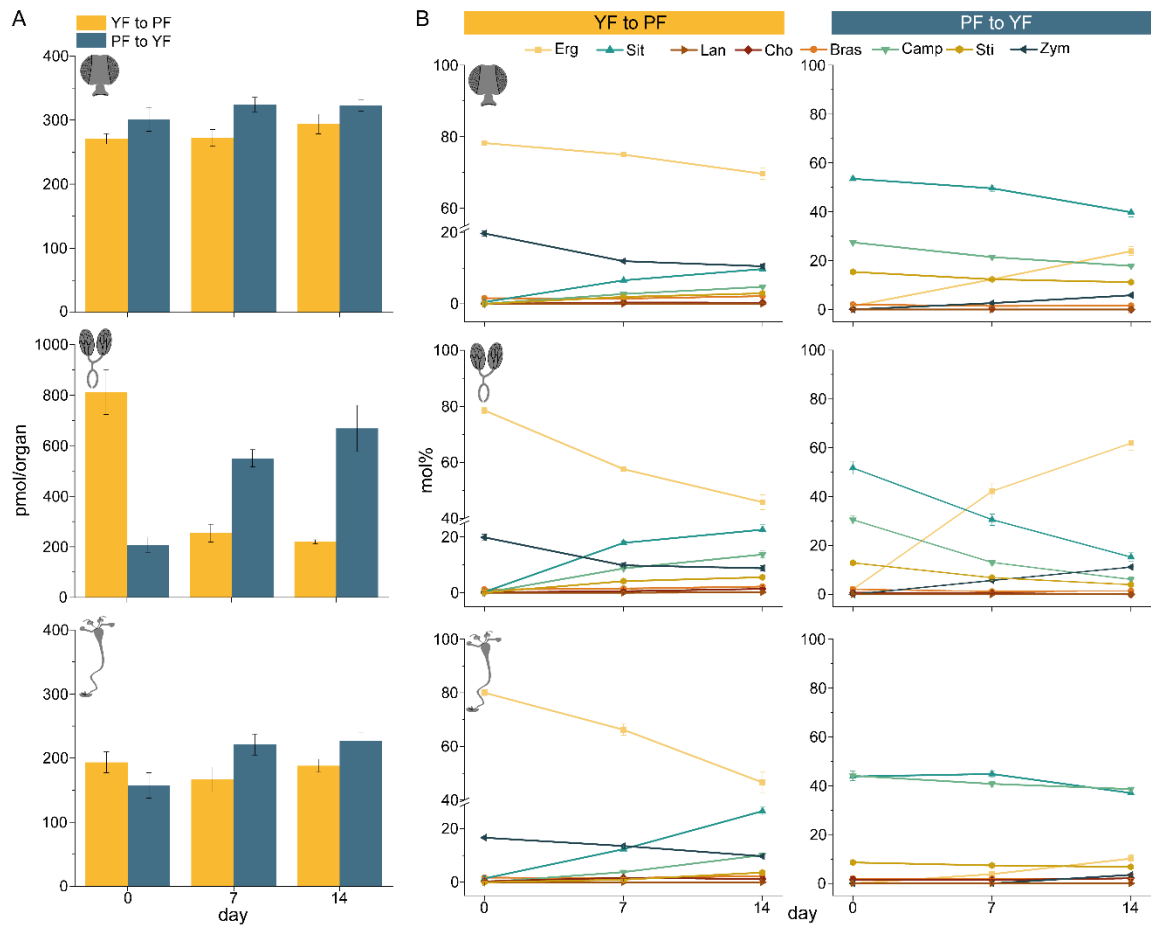
360 **Figure 3:** Sterol composition of yeast and plant foods and fly organs before the food swap (day  
361 0). A. Sterol composition of yeast food (YF) and organs of flies reared on YF. B. Sterol  
362 composition of plant food (PF) and organs of flies reared on PF. Abundances of individual  
363 sterols were normalized to the total sterol content and presented in mol%; error bars indicate  
364 SD standard deviation (n = 3 with technical duplicates).

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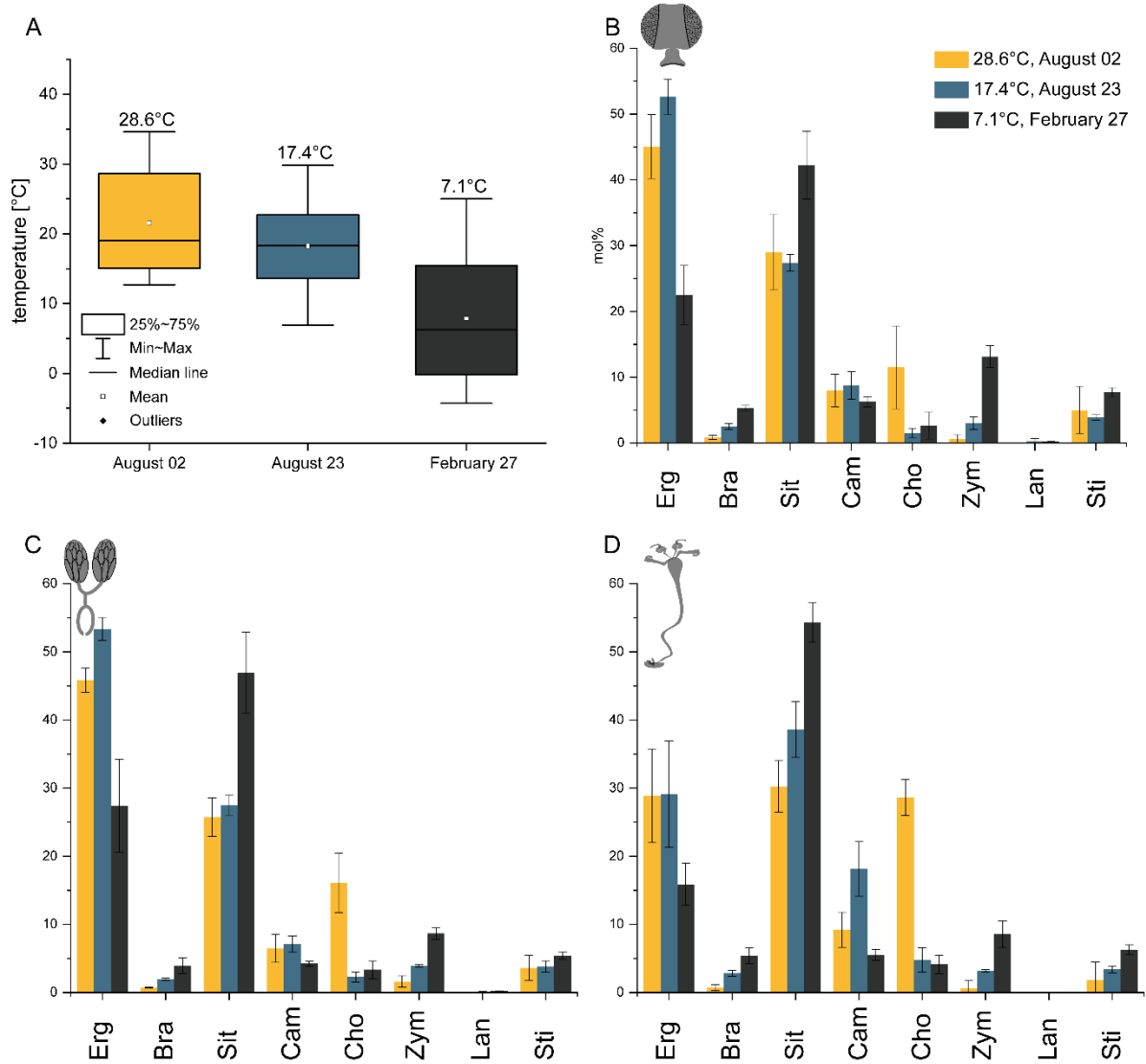
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370 **Figure 4.** Sterol composition of fly organs during food swapping experiments (YF to PF and  
371 PF to YF) on days 0, 7 and 14. Panel A: total amount of sterols (in pmols per organ); Panel B:  
372 relative abundances (in mol%) of individual sterols (n = 3 with technical duplicates).



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374 **Figure 5:** Sterol compositions of organs of wild flies collected at different temperatures. Panel  
 375 A: Box plots showing temperature variation during two weeks prior the three collection times.  
 376 Temperatures above the whiskers indicate collection temperatures. Panels B-D: Relative  
 377 abundances (in mol%) of individual sterols in different organs at different temperatures.  
 378 Collection temperatures are shown in inset. (B-D) Sterol composition of wild flies for H, fGT,  
 379 and mGT, respectively (n = 3, standard deviation, technical duplicates).

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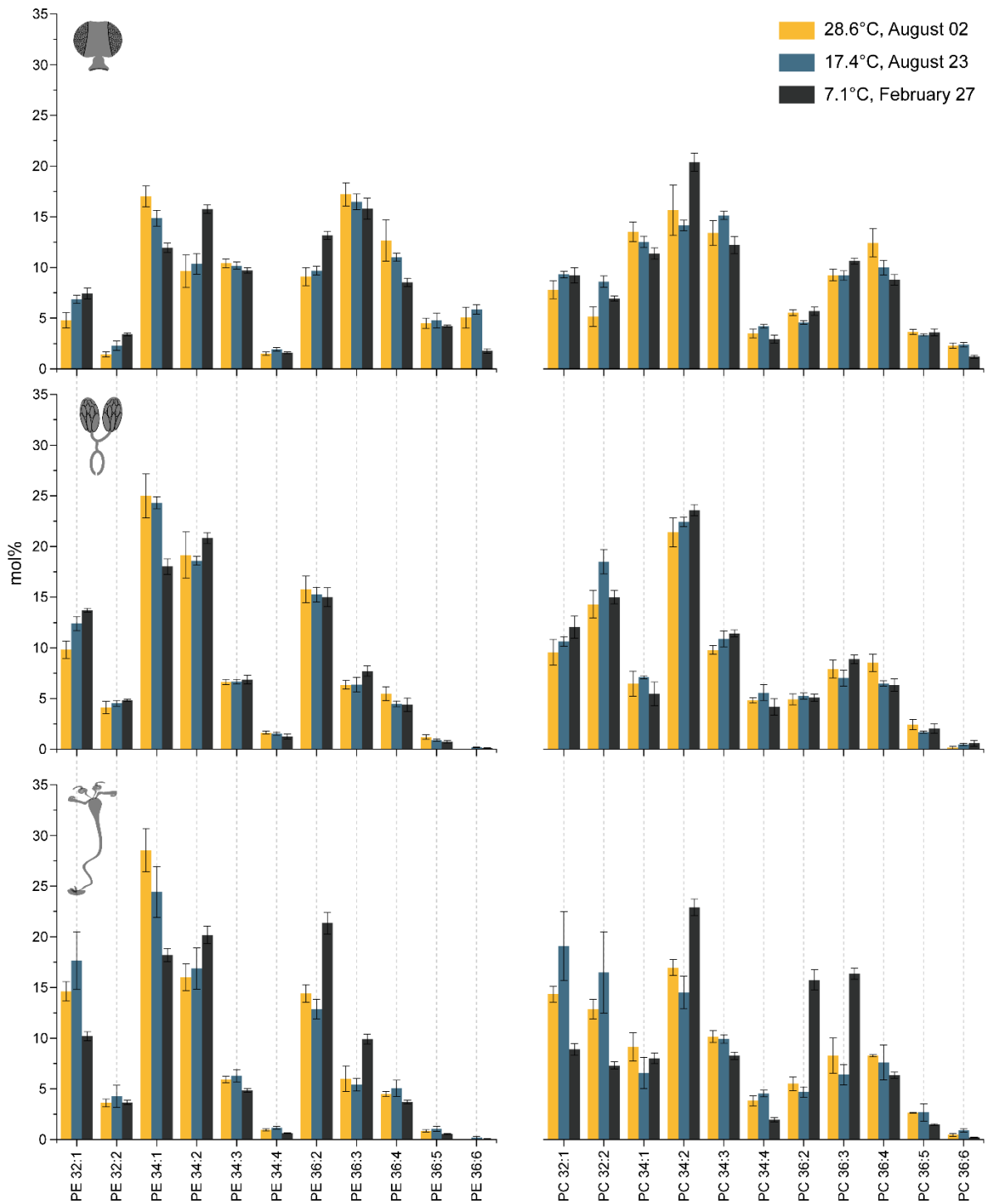
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**Figure 6.** Relative abundance (in mol%) of PE and PC species in different organs of wild flies collected at different temperatures (see inset). Species annotated by lipid class and total number of carbons: total number of double bonds in the fatty acid moieties. For clarity, only species whose relative abundance exceeded 1.0 mol% are shown. (n = 3 with technical duplicates).

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