

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. Giovanni Galizia for his support, confidence and almost unbeatable optimism. I have learnt a lot from our discussions and the shared work.

I would like to thank Dr. Randolph Menzel, for his contagious enthusiasm for science and for his permanent disposition to discuss experiments and give advice.

Thanks to Dr. Marien de Bruyne for sharing his knowledge about flies and odors, and for keeping the Friday seminars alive.

I am also very thankful to all members of the AG Galizia in Berlin. Without the friendly atmosphere, constant support and motivating words my years in Berlin would have been for sure less enjoyable. In particular, I would like to thank Philipp Peele and Silke Sachse for their help in my first experiments with insect brains and optical imaging, Beate Eisermann for her assistance in all daily laboratory matters and her contribution to this work, Daniela Pelz for our fly discussions, her patient ear to listen to my frequent sorrows and her valuable comments on this text, and Mathias Ditzen for his help with data analysis and for introducing me to R.

All members of the Institute for Neurobiology at the FU Berlin have somehow contributed to make this work possible with their friendliness, their technical and administrative assistance, and their readiness to discuss scientific and not so scientific matters. I already miss the Tuesdays and Thursdays Tea ceremony, our lunch trips to the Mensa or to the lake, and the evenings sitting in the garden (in summer only, of course). I would like to thank the Berliner Doktorandinnen with whom I enjoyed many cocktail and quiz nights and shared many conversations about our future in science (or the lack of it).

I also want to thank all members of the new AG Galizia in Konstanz for their warm welcome and for making this last year sitting in front of the computer more bearable.

Thanks to Daniel Münch for translating the Summary and Johannes Larsch for helpful comments on the text.

Many friends have supported (and tolerated) me along these years, from different places and in different ways. For helping me keep going in difficult times and for always giving me the feeling that I am not alone: THANK YOU, MUCHAS GRACIAS, VIELEN DANK!!!

I would like to thank Ilse, Anna and Bernd for making me part of their family.

I would like to thank my parents, for their encouragement, for always taking care of me, and for believing in me and my decisions more than I do.

Finally, I would like to thank Paul, for his patient reading and rereading of these pages and for standing by me in all sorts of ways.