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# A bee in the corridor: centering and wall-following

Julien R. SERRES, Guillaume P. MASSON, Franck RUFFIER and Nicolas FRANCESCHINI

*Biorobotics Lab., Institute of Movement Science*

*CNRS & Univ. of the Mediterranean*

*163, ave. Luminy, 13288 Marseille cedex 09, France*

*{julien.serres, franck.ruffier, nicolas.franceschini}@univmed.fr*

## Abstract

In an attempt to better understand the mechanism underlying lateral collision avoidance in flying insects, we trained honeybees (*Apis mellifera*) to fly through a large (95cm-wide) flight tunnel. We found that depending on the entrance and feeder positions, honeybees would either center along the corridor midline or fly along one wall. Bees kept following one wall even when a major (150cm-long) part of the opposite wall was removed. These findings cannot be accounted for by the ‘optic flow balance’ hypothesis that has been put forward to explain the typical bees’ ‘centering response’ observed in narrower corridors. Both centering and wall-following behaviours are well accounted for, however, by a mechanism called the lateral *optic flow regulator*, i.e., a feedback system that strives to maintain the unilateral optic flow constant. The power of this mechanism is that it would allow the bee to guide itself visually in a corridor *without having to measure its speed or distance from the walls*.

**Key words:** insect flight, honeybee, *Apis mellifera*, vision, optic flow, collision avoidance, image motion.

## 22 **Introduction**

23  
24 Winged insects navigate swiftly in unfamiliar environments by processing visual cues. A  
25 major visual cue is the *optic flow* (OF), that is, the *angular velocity* at which any  
26 environmental feature sweeps past their eyes, in particular as a consequence of locomotion  
27 (Kennedy, 1939; Gibson, 1950; David, 1978; Lee, 1980, Buchner, 1984; Collett et al., 1993).  
28 Flies and bees possess smart OF sensors, in terms of neurons whose firing rates grow  
29 monotonically with speed (Collett and King, 1975; Ibbotson, 2001, Straw et al., 2008).

30 Evidence that bees rely on the lateral OF to control their flight was provided by  
31 ingenuous experiments on bees that were trained to enter deep into a corridor formed by two  
32 walls. Each wall carried a pattern consisting of a vertical black-and-white grating, and one of  
33 the two walls could be moved (Kirchner and Srinivasan, 1989). As long as the corridor walls  
34 remained stationary, bees tended to fly equidistant from the two walls, producing what has  
35 been called the '*centering behaviour*'. However, when one of the gratings was moved, the  
36 bee's trajectory shifted *off center*. To explain this shift, the authors hypothesised that the  
37 flying bee balances the angular velocities (i.e., the OFs) of the walls, as perceived laterally by  
38 the two eyes (Kirchner and Srinivasan, 1989).

39 This type of experiment on honeybees was always performed (i) with entrance and  
40 feeder centered along the corridor midline, and (ii) in relatively *narrow* corridors of either a  
41 constant width  $D$  ( $D=12\text{cm}$  in Kirchner and Srinivasan, 1989, and Srinivasan et al., 1991;  
42  $D=15.5\text{cm}$  in Srinivasan et al., 1993;  $D=10\text{cm}$  to  $20\text{cm}$  in Hrncir et al., 2004;  $D=22\text{cm}$  to  
43  $32\text{cm}$  in Baird et al., 2005), or a variable width (a corridor tapering from  $38\text{cm}$  to  $12\text{cm}$  and  
44 expanding again to  $38\text{cm}$ , in Srinivasan et al., 1996).

45 Honeybees are able to adopt a terrain-following behaviour on the basis of a *ventral OF*  
46 *regulator* controlling the bee's vertical lift (Franceschini et al., 2007). In the present account  
47 we address the question of whether honeybees are able to adopt a wall-following behaviour on  
48 the sole basis of the lateral OF.

## 49 **Materials and Methods**

50

### 51 *Experimental corridor*

52

53 The experiments were carried out in the south of France, near Marseille ( $43.40^\circ\text{N}$ ,  $5.55^\circ\text{E}$ ,  
54  $336\text{m}$ ) in September (day temperature:  $20\text{-}31^\circ\text{C}$ ), and October 2005 (day temperature:  $18\text{-}$   
55  $23^\circ\text{C}$ ). Experiments consisted in making video recordings of the free-flight trajectories of

56 honeybees (*Apis mellifera*) under four experimental conditions. The experimental set-up (Fig.  
57 1a) consisted of a relatively wide (95cm) and long (300cm) rectangular corridor (25cm-  
58 height). The two walls were wallpapered with a pattern of vertical grey-and-white stripes of  
59 spatial wavelength  $\lambda = 10\text{cm}$  using a solvent free glue (Sader© Fortissimo, MS polymer-  
60 based glue). The Michelson contrast was  $m = 0.41$ , as measured in the green spectral range  
61 (specific for motion vision in the honeybee: Kaiser and Liske, 1974).

62 By using a pattern with a relatively large spatial wavelength (10cm), we made sure  
63 that the bee would see it whatever its lateral positioning in the wide corridor, given the small  
64 bee's interommatidial and acceptance angles, which are both in the order of 2.5 deg for  
65 laterally oriented ommatidia (Seidl and Kaiser, 1981; Horridge, 2003).

66 In the last experiment, a 1.5m long central part of the left wall was removed (between  
67 abscissae  $X = 75\text{cm}$  and  $X = 225\text{cm}$ ). Through this wide opening, the nearest (15m) trunk of a  
68 tree that the bee could see produced an OF of only  $4^\circ/\text{s}$  (see 4<sup>th</sup> column in Table 1).

69 The coarsely textured wooden floor was white, maximizing the contrast between the  
70 insect and the floor in the video sequences. The corridor was roofed with see-through insect  
71 netting allowing efficient corridor ventilation and closed with a white plank at each end. Bees  
72 could enter the corridor only through one of three entrance holes in the insect netting (left  
73 Entrance:  $E_L$ , central Entrance:  $E_C$ , right Entrance:  $E_R$ ). This arrangement forced the bees to  
74 enter the corridor with a quasi zero forward speed.

75

### 76 *Bee training*

77

78 Experiments were conducted outdoors on clear days with no wind. Bees were trained to enter  
79 the corridor through one of the three entrances ( $E_L$ ,  $E_C$ ,  $E_R$ , see Fig. 1a), depending on the  
80 experiment. Bees were first trained for three days to feed on a honey-flavoured sweet that was  
81 placed each time deeper and deeper in the corridor, up to the final position shown in Fig. 1a.  
82 At the end of the training session, the sweet was replaced by a sugar solution feeder (35%  
83 w/w, i.e., 1.2M sucrose concentration) for an additional two days to exclude any unwanted  
84 olfactory cues. The feeder was placed at one of the three positions (left  $F_L$ , central  $F_C$  or right  
85  $F_R$ ), depending upon the experiment. After the training session, trajectories of single bees  
86 flying to the feeder were video-filmed from above. Bees' return paths home across the  
87 corridor were not recorded.

88

89 *Video-recording and flight path analysis*

90

91 The bees' flight trajectories to the feeder were filmed at a rate of 20 frames/s with a high-  
92 resolution digital black-and-white CMOS camera (*Prosilica*<sup>TM</sup> EC1280: 1280x1024 pixels)  
93 placed at 220cm above the corridor floor (Fig. 1a). We only consider bees entered one at a  
94 time in the camera field of view during the recordings. The data were stored on a standard  
95 notebook computer equipped with an image sequence acquisition software program. The  
96 camera field of view was adjusted to 150cm in length and 95cm in width, centered on the  
97 corridor. Despite the area covered by the video camera being 64-fold larger than in other  
98 studies (Kirchner and Srinivasan, 1989; Srinivasan et al., 1991), the camera resolution still  
99 made it possible to record an image of the bee's body in the form of an oriented ellipse  
100 consisting of about 14 pixels in length by about 8 pixels in width. Image sequences were  
101 stacked, calibrated and thresholded by ImageJ macros (<http://rsb.info.nih.gov/ij/>). We  
102 processed all the 156 recorded flight trajectories using a *Matlab*<sup>TM</sup> script to determine for each  
103 frame the bee's ordinate ( $y$ ) as a function of the abscissa ( $x$ ) along the corridor axis (Fig. 1c).

104

105 *Statistical analysis*

106

107 For each bee's trajectory, the current forward speed at each abscissa  $x$  was computed using a  
108 four-point derivative smoothing filter. We associate each bee's trajectory with an average  
109 forward speed  $V_x$  and an average ordinate  $y$ . Then, we indicate in the Table 1 (2<sup>nd</sup> column), the  
110 mean value and standard deviation of the average speed calculated for each trajectory.  
111 Statistical data analyses were performed with the 'R' software program ([http://www.r-](http://www.r-project.org/)  
112 [project.org/](http://www.r-project.org/)). Student's  $t$ -tests were used to compare two mean ordinates: the significance  
113 level was taken at  $\alpha \leq 0.05$  to determine differences. When data-sets were used for more than  
114 one statistical comparison, the significance level was corrected using Bonferroni's correction:  
115  $\alpha_c = 0.05/N$  (with  $N$  the number of comparisons).

116

## 117 **Results**

118

### 119 *Centering and not centering*

120

121 Figures 2a-c show trajectories of freely flying honeybees in the straight corridor lined with  
122 vertical stripes (cf. Fig. 1). The arrows show the bees' entrance position ( $E_L$ ,  $E_C$ , or  $E_R$ ) and  
123 the circles give the feeder position ( $F_L$ ,  $F_C$ , or  $F_R$ ). Each solid line corresponds to one bee's  
124 trajectory obtained by processing the successive video frames.

125 Figure 2a shows the bees' trajectories observed when both the entrance and the feeder  
126 were centered in the corridor ( $E_C$  and  $F_C$ ). The bees can be seen to have flown along the  
127 midline of the corridor, consistent with the "centering response" described by Kirchner and  
128 Srinivasan (1989). The mean value of the mean ordinates of the 30 trajectories was  $48 \pm 11$ cm  
129 ( $\pm$  S.D.), which is very close to the corridor midline ordinate: 47.5cm ( $t$ -test,  $t=-0.162$ ,  $df=29$   
130  $p=0.872$ ).

131 By contrast, bees trained to enter and collect the food near one wall were seen to fly  
132 close to that same wall (Figs. 2b,c). In Fig. 2b, for example, where both entrance and feeder  
133 were placed on the left-hand side ( $E_L$  and  $F_L$ ), the mean value of the mean ordinates of the 27  
134 trajectories is  $30 \pm 8$ cm, a value that departs considerably ( $t$ -test,  $t=-7.01$ ,  $df=51.9$ ,  $p<0.001$ )  
135 from the result obtained in Fig. 2a where bees flew centered on average. This major deviation  
136 from the midline is confirmed by the converse experiment (Fig. 2c), where both entrance and  
137 feeder were on the right-hand side of the corridor ( $E_R$  and  $F_R$ ): bees can be seen to have  
138 hugged the right wall. In this case, the mean value of the mean ordinates of the 42 trajectories  
139 is  $71 \pm 8$ cm, a value that again is at odds with the centering behaviour observed in Fig. 2a ( $t$ -  
140 test,  $t=9.57$ ,  $df=50.1$ ,  $p<0.001$ ).

141

### 142 *Removing part of the wall on one side*

143

144 We then tested the bees trained as in Fig. 2c (i.e.,  $E_R$  and  $F_R$ ) in a situation where we removed  
145 a major, 150cm long portion (between abscissae  $X=75$ cm and  $X=225$ cm) of the left wall  
146 during the trials, so as to considerably degrade the OF on that side (see Materials and  
147 Methods).

148 As shown in Figure 2d, the bees flew near the right wall in much the same way as they  
149 did in Fig. 2c, without seemingly being affected by the absence of the left wall. Indeed, the

150 mean value of the mean ordinates of the 57 trajectories is  $71\pm 10\text{cm}$ , that is, a value strikingly  
 151 similar to that ( $71\pm 8\text{cm}$ ) obtained in the presence of the left wall (Fig. 2c) ( $t$ -test,  $t=0.026$ ,  
 152  $df=94.6$ ,  $p=0.979$ ).

153 When under this same condition (absence of the left wall), entrance and feeder were  
 154 placed on the *left-hand* side (E<sub>L</sub> and F<sub>L</sub>) bees seemed to be highly confused during the trial.  
 155 Some bees flew out of the opening and returned to the corridor. Some of these flew backward  
 156 towards the starting-point, or attempted to cross the corridor toward the opposite (right) wall  
 157 (no trajectory shown here).

158 Taken together, these results show that bees flying along a straight corridor do not  
 159 systematically center along the midline. They may instead adopt a flight path that keeps them  
 160 close to one wall. Upon hugging the wall, they seem to rely on a close visuomotor interaction  
 161 with it and are not flummoxed by the absence of the opposite wall.

162

### 163 *Comparing the left and right optic flows*

164

165 Table 1 gives for each experiment (Fig. 2) the mean and standard deviation values of the right  
 166 ( $\omega_R$ ) and left ( $\omega_L$ ) OFs, calculated as the speed divided by the distance from the respective  
 167 wall. Right and left OFs did not differ significantly when the bees centered in the corridor ( $t$ -  
 168 test,  $t=-0.187$ ,  $df=57.1$ ,  $p=0.852$ ), but differed markedly in the three cases of wall-following  
 169 behaviour (Fig.2b-d:  $t$ -test for all right/left pairs of lateral OFs,  $p<0.001$ ). Most striking is the  
 170 fact that the *unilateral* OF value is nearly the same for the three cases of wall-following  
 171 behaviour (Table 1), ( $t$ -test,  $\alpha_c=0.025$ ,  $p>\alpha_c$  for each comparison).

172 Another striking observation is that bees flew faster when entering and feeding on the  
 173 left side than on the right side of the corridor (compare the  $V_x$  values in Table 1). One reason  
 174 for this may be that the temperature on the day we performed the left wall experiment was  
 175 higher ( $23^\circ\text{C}$ ) than on the day we performed the *right* wall experiment ( $18^\circ\text{C}$ ). Given that  
 176 bees' activity depends notably on temperature, this  $5^\circ\text{C}$  increase in temperature might account  
 177 for the higher forward speed observed. If speed differs significantly between the two  
 178 situations ( $t$ -test,  $t=3.58$ ,  $df=39.9$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), so does the distance from the nearer wall ( $t$ -test,  
 179  $t=2.98$ ,  $df=57.4$ ,  $p=0.004$ ). Distance and speed appear to be tuned to each other, as if flying  
 180 closer to a wall would imply flying at a reduced speed and vice versa (see Table 1). Important  
 181 is the fact that in both situations the *unilateral optic flow* remained virtually the same ( $t$ -test,

182  $t=0.483$ ,  $df=49.2$ ,  $p=0.632$ ), as attested by Table 1 (grey shades for  $\omega_L$  and  $\omega_R$  corresponding  
183 to Fig. 2b and 2c, respectively).  
184  
185



## 186 Discussion

187

188 The present experiments on honeybees trained to fly in a *wide* corridor toward an ‘artificial  
 189 nectar source’ show that they do not systematically fly along the corridor midline (Fig. 2b,c).  
 190 Clearly, bees can also hug one wall, keeping a tight visual contact with it and controlling their  
 191 lateral positioning without caring much about the opposite wall (Fig. 2b,c). This view is  
 192 strengthened by the observation that bees keep hugging one wall even when a large part of the  
 193 opposite wall is removed (Fig. 2d). Corridor ‘wall-following’ is thus another visual ability of  
 194 the bee that adds to the ‘centering behaviour’ observed repeatedly over the last 20 years  
 195 (Kirchner and Srinivasan, 1989, Srinivasan et al., 1991; review: Srinivasan and Zhang, 2004).

196 In our large corridor, bees adopted a wall-following behaviour whenever both entrance  
 197 and feeder were located near the same wall (Fig. 2b,c). In former experiments, bees had been  
 198 trained to enter a narrow (12cm-wide) corridor, one wall of which was movable (Srinivasan et  
 199 al., 1991). The authors had observed that bees would normally fly along the corridor midline  
 200 but shifted off center when the wall was moved. This striking reaction shows that bees gauge  
 201 neither the actual distance to the walls (which is not altered by the movement of the wall  
 202 whatsoever) nor the angular subtense of the walls (which is not altered by the movement of  
 203 the wall either) (Srinivasan et al., 1991). They also observed that the bee’s *centering response*  
 204 is largely independent of the spatial structure of the walls in terms of both spatial frequency  
 205 and contrast. All these observations (Srinivasan et al., 1991) showed compellingly that the  
 206 visuomotor control mechanism at work in *flying* bees relies on the OF, which is a dynamical  
 207 visual cue. The mechanism therefore differs strikingly from that inferred for *walking* ants  
 208 (Heusser and Wehner, 2002), which were shown to rely on the angular subtense of the walls –  
 209 a stationary visual cue.

210 That bees can rely on their self-induced OF is consistent with the finding that several  
 211 *flying* insect species, including bees, have neurons that respond to the angular speed of an  
 212 image (i.e., the OF) to a large extent independently of the spatial frequency and contrast  
 213 (Ibbotson, 2001; Shoemaker et al., 2005; Straw et al., 2008).

214 In the three cases of wall-following behaviour observed (Fig. 2b-d), bees were  
 215 sometimes heading at a small angle  $\Psi$  (Fig. 1c) from the corridor axis towards the wall they  
 216 followed (see Table 1). Since the bee’s frontal binocular field in the horizontal plane is not  
 217 negligible (about +/- 15 deg: Seild and Kaiser, 1981), the eye contralateral to the wall  
 218 followed may have contributed in part to the observed behaviour. Yet the heading remained,  
 219 on average, close to the tunnel axis ( $|\Psi| < 15$  deg), so that the OF perceived, e.g., by the *left* eye

220 on the *right* wall ( $\omega < 50^\circ/\text{s}$ ) was much smaller than the OF  $\omega_R$  perceived by the *right* eye on  
 221 that same wall (see Table 1).

222  
 223 How can a bee fly so deftly along one side of a corridor at all, caring so little about the  
 224 absence of the opposite wall? If, in the experiment shown in Fig. 2d, bees had balanced the  
 225 lateral OFs perceived on both sides - as suggested by the “optic flow balance” hypothesis  
 226 (Kirchner and Srinivasan, 1989) - they would have rushed out of the large opening in the left  
 227 wall, in search of a left OF of comparable size to that perceived on the right-hand side.  
 228 Kirchner and Srinivasan (1989) recorded the bees’ trajectories when one wall was replaced by  
 229 a homogeneously grey sheet (contrast  $m < 0.05$ ) that generated a poor lateral OF on one side.  
 230 The authors reported that the bees’ trajectories shifted toward the homogeneous side, albeit  
 231 without bumping into it (Kirchner and Srinivasan, 1989; Srinivasan et al., 1991). In other  
 232 experiments, the authors further investigated this ‘lateral response’ by testing bees in a narrow  
 233 corridor (15.5cm-wide), one wall of which had a circular window (diameter 21cm) that  
 234 displayed no pattern. The bees were observed to shift toward this aperture too (Srinivasan et  
 235 al., 1993).

236 To explain these behavioural patterns, our working hypothesis is that a bee will follow  
 237 the right or left wall by *regulating* (i.e., maintaining constant) whichever *lateral* OF (right or  
 238 left) is *greater*. In another context, we have proposed a simple feedback mechanism, termed  
 239 the *OF regulator*, that explains *how* a miniature air-vehicle can maintain its lateral OF  
 240 constant throughout its travel through a corridor (Serres et al., 2008). Simulation experiments  
 241 showed that the agent can control its side slip on the sole basis of a *unilateral OF regulator*  
 242 (based on OF sensors mounted on either sides). At all times, the OF regulator strives to  
 243 maintain the greater of the lateral OFs perceived from the walls constant. Since by definition  
 244 the lateral OF is equal to the speed/distance ratio, this amounts to maintaining the distance to  
 245 the wall proportional to the current forward speed. The striking correlation noted above  
 246 between forward speed and distance from the wall is fully consistent with this ‘unilateral optic  
 247 flow regulation’ hypothesis. Indeed, the value of the optic flow experienced by the bee was  
 248 virtually the same (compare  $\omega_L$  and  $\omega_R$  for Fig. 2b and c: grey shades in Table 1), even though  
 249 both speed and distance were significantly different in the two situations.

250 There is an infinite number of combinations of flight speed and distance that will generate a  
 251 desired level of OF. If the bee has no information on its flight speed, then the OF of 235

252 deg/sec can be produced by flying at a speed of 117cm/sec at a distance of 30cm from the  
 253 wall, or at 58.5cm/sec at a distance of 15cm, etc. Inspired by the observation that the bee's  
 254 flight speed in a tunnel depends on the *sum of the right and left* OFs (Srinivasan et al. 1996),  
 255 we showed that this chicken-and-egg problem can be solved by adding a second *OF regulator*  
 256 that would be in charge of controlling the flight speed. In a recent paper dealing with realistic  
 257 simulation experiments (Serres et al., 2008), we have shown that the flight of an air vehicle in  
 258 a tunnel can be fully determined, as regards both speed and distance from the walls, on the  
 259 basis of two interdependent OF regulators. The power of the hypothesis is that sensible  
 260 behaviour is achieved without *measuring* speed, distance and tunnel width at all. Our  
 261 simulation experiments also showed (Serres et al., 2008) that by adding the second lateral OF-  
 262 based feedback loop controlling the forward speed, the robot's behaviour (in terms of both  
 263 *speed* and *distance* from the walls) would mimick the one observed on flying honeybees  
 264 travelling through a straight or tapered corridor (Kirchner and Srinivasan, 1989; Srinivasan et  
 265 al., 1996).

266         The *unilateral OF regulator* principle is similar in many respects to the *ventral OF*  
 267 *regulator* principle that was put forward to explain the behaviour of insects taking off,  
 268 following terrain and landing (Ruffier and Franceschini, 2005; Franceschini et al., 2007). But  
 269 whereas the *ventral OF regulator* served to control the bee's vertical lift (hence the height of  
 270 flight), the *unilateral OF regulator* put forward here serves to control the bee's sideways  
 271 thrust (hence the distance from a wall). Just as the *ventral OF regulator* maintained automatic  
 272 clearance from the ground below (thus preventing ground collisions), the *unilateral OF*  
 273 *regulator* maintains automatic clearance from the walls (thus preventing lateral collisions).  
 274 This simple system requires exclusively OF sensors which, as we now know, may be  
 275 provided by specific motion detecting neurons such as the bee's velocity tuned neurons (VT:  
 276 Ibbotson, 2001). On this view, the bee would approach or recess from a wall by simply  
 277 attempting to maintain the spike firing rate of some VT neurons constant and equal to a *set-*  
 278 *point*. This control scheme would present two advantages:

279         • A single parameter, the OF *set-point*, would allow the insect to keep a safe distance  
 280 from a wall without having to *measure* this distance. Nor would speed need to be *measured*.

281         • The *OF regulator* can be said to tune the animal's behaviour at all times such that the  
 282 OF will deviate little from the OF *set-point*. As noticed elsewhere (Franceschini et al., 2007),  
 283 this requirement to measure a mere OF *deviation* puts little constraint on the dynamic range of  
 284 the motion detecting neurons.

285           The control scheme suggested here is consistent not only with the bees' "wall-  
286 following" behaviour we have described, but also with the existence in bees of visual neurons  
287 that are able to evaluate the lateral OF. The scheme would confer upon the bee a safe  
288 clearance from the walls - a clearance commensurate with its forward speed - whatever the  
289 speed. Though simple, this control scheme is powerful as it would enable honeybees to  
290 prevent lateral collisions *without any needs to measure distance and speed*. This is consistent  
291 with the diminutive size of the insect's brain that is obviously not equipped with cumbersome  
292 range finders, Doppler radars or GPS receivers.  
293

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302

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 352 **Fig. 1** Experimental apparatus. **a** During the training session, bees entered the straight corridor (300x95x25 cm)  
 353 one by one, through one of the three Entrances (left:  $E_L$ , central:  $E_C$ , or right:  $E_R$ ) and were fed at one of the three  
 354 Feeder positions ( $F_L$ ,  $F_C$ , or  $F_R$ ). During the trials, a high-resolution digital camera placed 220cm above the  
 355 corridor filmed the trajectory of single flying bees (at 20 frames/s) over the central (150cm-long) part of the  
 356 corridor. An insect netting stretched flat over the flight tunnel prevented the bees from escaping upwards, while  
 357 enabling the camera to see through. Both walls were lined with a similar periodic pattern consisting of vertical  
 358 white-and-grey stripes (spatial period 10cm, contrast  $m = 0.41$ ). **b** In one experiment, a major part (150cm-long)  
 359 of the left wall was removed. **c** Top view of a bee flying at speed  $V$  along the corridor.  $\Psi$  is the bees's body yaw  
 360 angle with respect to the tunnel axis,  $x$  the body abscissa,  $y$  the body ordinate,  $V_x$  and  $V_y$  the forward and sway  
 361 components of speed, and  $D$  the corridor width.

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 368 **Fig. 2** Trajectories of individual bees tested in the corridor under four experimental conditions. **a** Both the bee's  
 369 entrance ( $E_C$ ) and the feeder ( $F_C$ ) were placed on the corridor midline. **b** and **c** Entrance and feeder were placed  
 370 on one side of the corridor ( $E_L$  and  $F_L$ , or  $E_R$  and  $F_R$ ). **d** The bee entered the corridor and was fed on the right-  
 371 hand side as in (c) ( $E_R$  and  $F_R$ ), but part of the left wall was removed during the trial (see Materials and  
 372 Methods). The histograms on top give the distribution of the mean ordinate of each trajectory. The value given  
 373 for the mean ordinate is followed by the standard deviation of the distribution.  $n$  is the number of trajectories  
 374 recorded in each experimental condition.

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 379 **Table 1.** Comparisons between the bees' ordinate  $y$ , the forward speed  $V_x$ , and the bee's body yaw angle  $\Psi$  for  
 380 each experimental condition (Fig. 2a-d). The last two columns indicate the values and standard deviations of the  
 381 right and left lateral optic flows ( $\omega_L$  and  $\omega_R$ ) perceived by the bees in each case. These values were calculated as  
 382 the speed /distance ratio (in rad/s) and converted into  $^\circ/s$ . Notice that the lateral optic flow perceived by the bees  
 383 with respect to the wall they choose to follow is of the same order of magnitude for the last three experimental  
 384 conditions (grey shade).

385

386 **Table 1.**

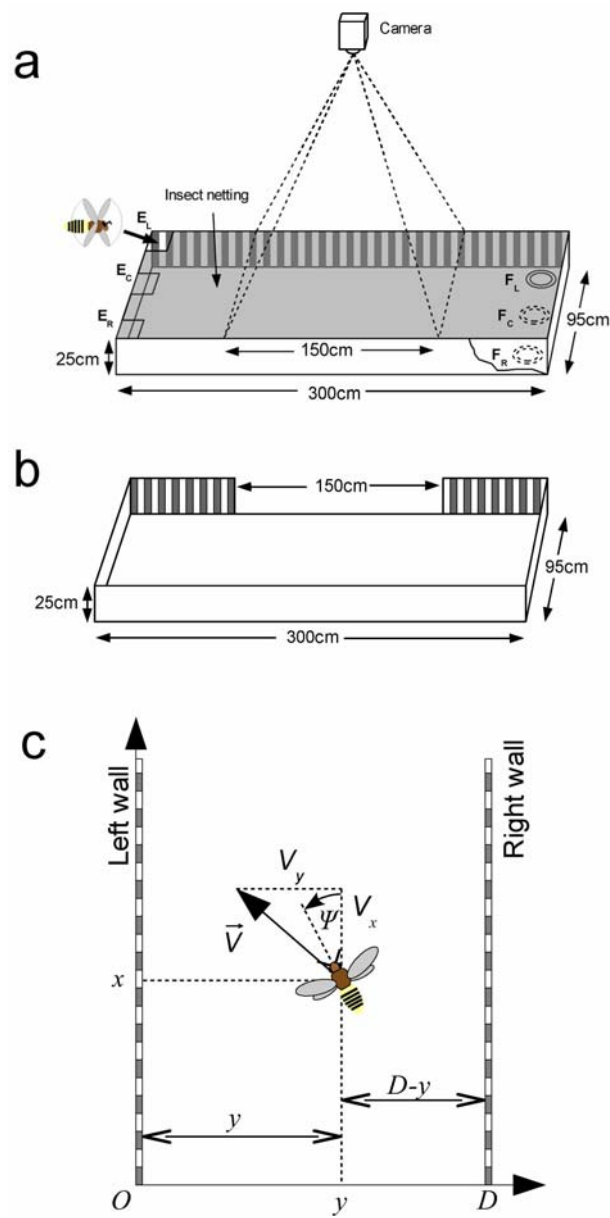
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Experiments and $n$ = number of trajectories	$y$ (cm)	$V_x$ (cm/s)	$\Psi$ ( $^\circ$ )	$\omega_L = V_x/y$ ( $^\circ/s$ )	$\omega_R = V_x/(D-y)$ ( $^\circ/s$ )
Fig. 2a, $E_C \rightarrow F_C$ (2 walls), $n=30$	$47 \pm 11$	$117 \pm 36$	$0 \pm 9$	$148 \pm 54$	$151 \pm 61$
Fig. 2b, $E_L \rightarrow F_L$ (2 walls), $n=27$	$30 \pm 8$	$117 \pm 38$	$5 \pm 8$	$235 \pm 80$	$106 \pm 39$
Fig. 2c, $E_R \rightarrow F_R$ (2 walls), $n=42$	$71 \pm 8$	$88 \pm 24$	$-13 \pm 9$	$73 \pm 25$	$226 \pm 68$
Fig. 2d, $E_R \rightarrow F_R$ (1 wall), $n=57$	$71 \pm 10$	$98 \pm 31$	$-9 \pm 10$	$4 \pm 1$	$265 \pm 116$

389

390 **Figure 1.**



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393 **Figure 2.**  
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