

Acknowledgement

Foremost, I would like to thank my advisors Prof. Volker Erdmann and Prof. Matthias Wabl for providing me with the opportunity to complete my PhD thesis at the Freie Universitat Berlin as an external student at the University of California, San Francisco. I especially want to thank my advisor on the spot, Prof. Matthias Wabl, whose support and guidance made my thesis work possible. He has been actively interested in my work and has always been available to advise me. I am very grateful for his patience, motivation, enthusiasm, and immense knowledge in B cell biology that, taken together, make him a great mentor.

I want to thank present and past members of the Wabl lab: Thomas Wechsler, Maik Klasen, and Ryan Harper for giving me an introduction into the Wabl lab and for sharing their knowledge. Thanks to Claudia Schaller for getting the party-live started for me in San Francisco, Tobias Gerdes for Starbucks breaks, and Cliff Wang for the indicator plasmid and some good advice. Also thanks to Desiree Yang for singing ridiculous songs and having a good time, and Marina Kolesnichenko for being a great rotation student. Special thanks to Gaby Beck-Engeser for helping to finish up various projects.

Thanks to Prof. Michael McManus and his assistant Amy Heidersbach for the reagents and for help with the RNAi experiments. Thanks to members of the Ganem lab, Lanier lab, and Ma lab for being the ultimate lab-neighbors, providing a great work environment, and for their help and chats. Also, would like to thank Julia Pielage, Alusha Mamchak, Piam Vacharotayangul, Melissa Lodoen, Jeroen Roose, Chris Sullivan, and Cliff McArthur for their skill in spreading happiness on those scientifically dark days. Thanks to Marylou who made all administrative issues during my stay at UCSF very easy.

For the non-scientific side of my thesis, I particularly want to thank my partner Lars Funke for sharing a studio apartment with me for 3.5 years (it must be love), for undertaking neat and adventurous excursions in California and Mexico, and for being my eternal sunshine. Thanks to Dana Goldberg and Brad Robertson for many evenings filled with wine and interesting discussions, for the introduction to Jewish traditions and to San Francisco's music scene. Also, thanks Dana for proofreading the manuscript. I am very grateful for meeting Talya Salz, my partner in cello crimes, and her husband Claude, and thank them for the too short but wonderful time and for introduction to many interesting people. Thanks to Kim and Olav Olsen and their MiniMe's Olav Jr. and Kaja for tons of great food and drink. Barbara and Dirk, thank

you for the accommodation, cigarettes, beer, and the great trips.

Thanks to Nicola Clegg and Brian Eames for the parties and for not giving up on me as someone who never responds to emails. Also, thanks to members of the Parnassus symphony, the Mendelssohn quartet, the Goat Hill Quartet, and the Minks for providing me with a thesis antidote in preparing for and performing shows. Finally, I thank my parents Helge and Ursula Spillmann and my sisters Lydia Langen and Beate Liermann and their families for their faith and support.