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**Sink or swim: submergence tolerance and survival strategies in Rorippa and Arabidopsis**

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Melis Akman was born in the moorlands of Ankara and never left the city until her PhD adventure in the Netherlands. As a child, she spent her summer holidays snorkeling, fishing, trekking and inevitably growing a fascination for nature. Influenced by her high school biology teacher, she started studying biology in Middle East Technical University in 2000. During her third year as an undergrad, she did an internship in Kızılıman conservation site in Southern Turkey within the framework of a WWF conservation project for Mediterranean monk seals. Her graduate study in the same department was concluded with her master thesis titled “Phylogenetic analysis of *Liquidambar orientalis* varieties by comparing the non-coding *trn* regions of chloroplast DNA” supervised

by Prof. Dr. Zeki Kaya. During her studies she grew the most interest in ecology and conservation as well as genetics and evolution. During her master studies she also worked as a researcher in the Research and Development department of a biotechnology company (Metis Biotechnology) where she mastered skills in the genetics lab. She moved to the Netherlands in 2007 and started her PhD studies in Experimental Plant Systematics group at the Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystems Dynamics in Universiteit Amsterdam with Prof. Dr. Peter H. van Tienderen and Prof. Dr. M. Eric Schranz. Later, she collaborated with Dr. Eric J. W. Visser from Experimental Plant Ecology group in Radboud University Nijmegen and many colleagues from Plant Ecophysiology group in Universiteit Utrecht. The results of her PhD studies are represented in this dissertation. She is moving to California with her husband Oytun, with the hope of advancing her academic carrier.