Thanks to the generous funding of the Roman Society I could spend two weeks in April at the Fondation Hardt. The stay at the Fondation allowed me to work on my thesis titled “In search of present time – the poetics of carpe diem”, in which I analyse which conceptions of present time carpe diem texts reveal. I am interested in how texts from the Hellenistic period and the early empire construct a present, which is mediated through the conception of present time in archaic lyric. More specifically, during my stay at the Fondation Hardt I looked at sympotic epigrams. For this topic in particular the Fondation is an inspiring place, as Giuseppe Giangrande presented his seminal paper on sympotic epigram in Vandoeuvres at the Entretiens. During my two weeks in Vandoeuvres I looked at epigrams of the Garland of Philip and analysed how their treatment of the carpe diem motif develops themes from earlier, Hellenistic epigram, while it is also distinctly influenced by the fashion of the time. I am fascinated with how these epigrams reflect the material culture of the early empire by making objects such as cups or jewellery speak and by allowing them to voice the fashionable exhortation of carpe diem.

The Fondation Hardt offers an ideal environment for research. The ample resources in the beautiful library allow one to heap up countless books on one’s desk until the moles propinqua nubibus arduis blocks the view over the equally beautiful gardens. I also found the conversations with other residents extremely enriching, as their diverse academic backgrounds from history through philosophy to linguistics made it possible to talk about almost any aspect of the ancient world. Particular thanks are due to the staff at the Fondation, who made the stay extremely pleasant at every turn. Finally, I wish to thank again the Roman Society and the Fondation Hardt for allowing me to do my research within such perfect surroundings.