Public Abstract
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This thesis examines the personification of death in the Dance of Death in a French, fifteenth-century Book of Hours. It places the Dance of Death in context with regard to its artist, its time and place of creation, its position within the margins of the Office of the Dead in a Book of Hours, and in relation to other Dances of Death. The Dance of Death is compared to other image cycles within the decorative program of the same manuscript - including themes of leprosy, St. Lazarus, blindness, personifications of the seven virtues, the fifteen signs of the apocalypse, and the life of St. Job. Similarities between these themes indicate a consistent plan behind the image program for the manuscript that is meant to guide the reader toward contemplating his life and presumably amend any errors therein. This thesis proposes that the manuscript was probably commissioned by a wealthy man who may have had connections to the Parisian court of John of Lancaster, the Duke of Bedford, and who may have had ties with the clergy and/or hospital ministries.