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### **Mecca With Love: Muslim Religious Apps and the Centering of Mecca**

This paper takes three strands of observations regarding Mecca and braids them together in an investigation of the landscape and impact of the four major categories of religious apps that include a focus on Mecca: *qibla* locators, Kaaba livestreams/wallpapers, *hajj* guides, and *umrah* guides. It brings together Richard Bulliet's argument that the fall of the original caliphate in the 1200s led to the increased centrality of Mecca and the *hajj* in legitimating particular post-caliphal dynasties' rule, and in their increased role in Muslim piety; Ahmed Matar's argument that Muslims around the world focus exclusively on the pilgrimage heart of the city, and that their pious engagement rests on a "denial" of the real, contemporary city of Mecca; and Ziauddin Sardar's reflection on how the Saudi government's has used the symbolic value of Mecca for political purposes. Using these three analytic lenses, I survey the field of Mecca-related apps and analyze a set of case studies within the four major sub-categories. This paper builds upon my previous research on the *hajj* apps produced and managed by the Saudi Ministry of Hajj and Umrah – primarily by zooming out from that research, which considered these apps largely in isolation from other *hajj*, *umrah*, and Mecca-focused apps. My analysis considers the broader context in which Ministry of Hajj and Umrah apps are embedded, recognizing that individual apps and genres of apps exist in a broader field – in this case, the field of Mecca-related, individual believer-oriented, religious apps.