



# Empire of Contingency

How Portugal Entered the Indo-Persian World

JORGE FLORES



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"Persuasively argued, absorbing, and well-researched."

—**Sanjay Subrahmanyam**, author of *Europe's India: Words, People, Empires, 1500–1800*

"A much-needed, major study of information gathering, record-keeping, and communication across cultures in the context of the European presence in Asia, on par with the best scholarship that we have for the Atlantic world."

—**Giuseppe Marcocci**, author of *The Globe on Paper: Writing Histories of the World in Renaissance Europe and the Americas*

*Empire of Contingency* explores the information and communication practices of the Portuguese empire in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century India. Jorge Flores uncovers the tenuous but ingenious intelligence apparatuses through which the Estado da Índia (the Portuguese political administrative unit in the region between the Cape of Good Hope and East Asia) endeavored to survive in a region shaped by the influence and power of the Mughal empire.

Through extensive archival research on the information gathering, record-keeping, and diplomatic correspondence of Portuguese officials in the Estado da Índia, Flores demonstrates how the Portuguese territories along the western coast of India were incorporated into the Persianate cultural sphere. Imperial administrators in these territories were vulnerable participants in a network of relations involving multiple powers. Tracing the enormous bureaucratic and diplomatic effort required to successfully navigate this position, Flores shows how a European empire was drawn into the political practices of the Indo-Persian world.

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