This paper analyzes two maps that portray the war between the Portuguese and the Dutch between 1624 and 1625 for the conquest of São Salvador city, then the capital of Brazil. The first map, of Dutch origin, entitled Beschryvinge Don't in-nemen van de Stadt Salvador Inde Baya of All Saints in Brazil door den E. Admirael Jacob Willekes (Description of the capture of Salvador in the Bay of All Saints in Brazil, by Claes Jansz Visscher and Hessel Gerritszoon) was published in Amsterdam in 1624. The second, of Portuguese origin, is entitled Planta da restituição da Bahia (Map of Bahia city restitution), authored by João Teixeira Albernaz I, and published in his 1631 Atlas do Estado do Brasil / Atlas of the Brazil State. The first map, a so-called "news map", depicts the seizure of the city by the naval and military forces of the Dutch West Indies Company (WIC) on May 9, 1624. The second, on the opposite side, represents the expulsion of the Dutch from the city by the military force dispatched by the Luso-Spanish Crown, in an offensive that became known as the "Journey of the Vassals", which culminated on March 29, 1625 with the withdrawal of the Dutch and the restitution of the city by the Luso-Spaniards. Usually, in an uncritical way, the first map is used by historians to illustrate with images the capture of the city by the Dutch and the second of their expulsion. Taking instead a critical perspective, in which maps are understood as powerful visual political weapons, the purpose of this paper is to compare the two maps - from the point of view of the techniques, of what is portrayed, of what is omitted, of what intended audience it is aimed, etc. - to reveal the distinct messages that each sought to build about the Salvador War for a larger public audience. This event constituted an important episode of the Dutch conquest of the Northeastern sugar area of Brazil, an invasion whose flux and reflux extended from 1624 to 1654 in the context of the disputes between the Netherlands and Spain (then a united Crown with Portugal), caused both by the independence of the former and by the competition for the colonial commercial circuits until then monopolized mainly by the Iberian powers.

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Image Credit: Claes Jansz. Visscher, Beschryvinghe van ’t in-nemen van de Stadt Salvador inde Baya de Todos os Sanctos in Brasil (Amsterdam, 1624), 33.6 × 39.5 cm. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum, RP-P-OB 79.371. (Reproduced with permission from the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, at https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Claes-Jansz-Visscher-Beschryvinghe-van-t-in-nemen-van-de-Stadt-Salvador-inde-Baya-de_fig4_329250088)