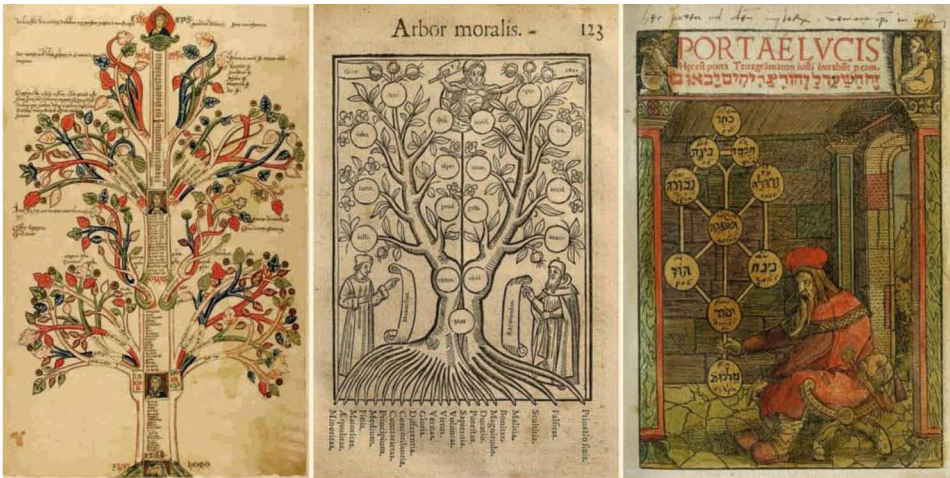# Chapter 1
A Brief History of Concept Maps

ABSTRACT

This section of concept maps will trace the works of Ramon Lull and Peter Ramus by comparing and contrasting their respective diagrams. In retrospect it will be argued that Ramon Lull's maps, which were basically religious in nature, were what we could call today, object maps, because of their colorful, concrete, almost multi-sensory presentation. On the hand, Peter Ramus's maps, according to cognitive styles theory to be discussed in a later chapter, were comparatively highly verbal and abstract. Marshall McLuhan, whose ideas lurk in the background throughout this book would say that according to his "law", "the medium is the message," Lull's medium, the illuminated manuscript on vellum, was quite different that Ramus' medium which was the printed book. The chapter ends with the philosophical language of Leibnitz, which has elements of what will be called verbal maps and spatial maps, two definite trends in concept mapping.

RAMON LULL

Historically, conceptual maps can be traced back at least to the Middle Ages, when such maps were used as memory devices for religious purposes and as educational tools to show others "to find their way" among spiritual to secular truths deemed important at that time. The predominantly religious aspect of the medieval maps can be seen in figure 1 which today could be

Figure 1. Spiritual mind maps in the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Source: http://2. bp.blogspot.com/-Ngpojitzqpg/VlegmgcLU0I/AAAAAAAG-w/ipLRZW0Eeug/ s1600/joachim-lull-q-branch.jpg

characterized as mind maps to help the faithful in an age when spiritual knowledge was more important than scientific other forms.

Perhaps the best known of these spiritual mind maps is found in the work of Ramon Lull, who designed a dynamic diagram which could be regarded as the first logic machine ever by taking popular trees of life illustrations and converting them to a religious machine, which he called, the *Ars Magnas.* According to Martin Gardner, mathematician and popular science writer an important history of science book, *Logic Machines and Diagrams,* Lull constructed his maps to answer spiritual questions based on the religious authorities of his time. Although Ramon Lull's main motive for inventing his device was to use it to convert the heathen, mainly Muslims and Jews, to Christianity, he probably got the idea for the invention from the zairja, a device Muslim astrologers used to make predictions along with generating answers and commentary on astrological matters (Gardner, 1958).

Ramon Lull (1232 – c. 1315) was born in Palma, the capital of the newly formed Kingdom of Majorca. As part of the effort to colonize the Mediterranean island, Lull's wealthy aristocratic parents came from Catalonia of present day Spain, as occupiers of the island which the Catalonians had conquered, enslaving all the Muslim population who had not been able to flee the island. Although married with two children, Ramon lived his youth as a licentious and wasteful troubadour. Lull, however, could not have been a complete wastrel

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