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Preface

The current issue of *Wacana, Journal of the Humanities of Indonesia* Vol. 14 No. 2 (October 2012) highlights the importance of documents and archives in the production of knowledge about Indonesian cultures, ranging from archaeological findings in Sumatra in the form of inscriptions in Old Javanese from the ancient time to an urban-anthropological study on urban symbolism in today's Indonesian cities. A set of narratives gives a story about the first inhabitants of Mentawai Islands. Narratives of origin of the inhabitants of Mentawai Islands show that 'documents' in the form of collective memory plays a central role in shaping a sense of identity to the locals. Language seems to be the most powerful form of document, as evident in the articles on the TAP-languages in Papua and on the descriptions of some Malay languages, such as the Sea Tribe-lects and local Malays in North Maluku. It is apparent that in the Indonesian context, language can serve as a unifier as we delve deeper into the studies of language origins and communities. Historical studies that look into old maps of the Indonesian archipelago from the Portuguese era and VOC's colonial archives not only demonstrate that cartography and archives served as means of securing control over colonies, but also offer insights into the cultural representation of the colonized Other. Finally, there is a brief tribute to Hans Andries Teeuw, a remarkably learned scholar of Indonesian studies, presented by his former colleagues and student, to commemorate his invaluable contribution to the documentation of the Nusantara culture.