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# Interview with Pavla Šimková, author of *Urban Archipelago: An Environmental History of the Boston Harbor Islands*

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> The Boston Harbor Islands have been called Boston's "hidden shores." While some are ragged rocks teeming with coastal wildlife, such as oystercatchers and harbor seals, others resemble manicured parks or have the appearance of wooded hills rising gently out of the water. Largely ignored by historians and previously home to prisons, asylums, and sewage treatment plants, this surprisingly diverse ensemble of islands has existed quietly on the urban fringe over the last four centuries. Even their latest incarnation as a national park and recreational hub has emphasized their separation from, rather than their connection to, the city. In this book, Dr. Pavla Simková reinterprets the Boston Harbor Islands as an urban archipelago, arguing that they have been an integral part of Boston since colonial days, transformed by the city's changing values and catering to its current needs. Drawing on archival sources, historic maps and photographs, and diaries from island residents, this absorbing study attests that the harbor islands' story is central to understanding the ways in which Boston has both shaped and been shaped by its environment over time.
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> (Source: New Books Network )

In this episode of *New Books in History*, Aliide Naylor interviews Pavla Šimková, author of *Urban Archipelago: An Environmental History of the Boston Harbor Islands*.

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