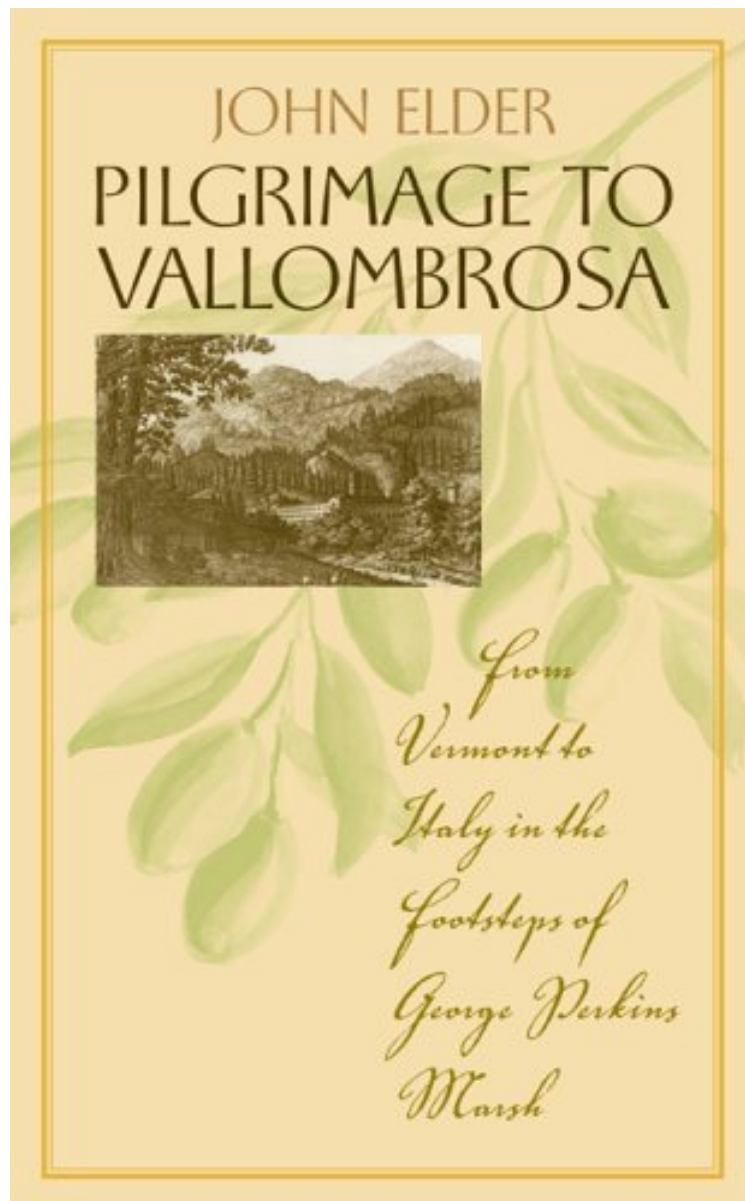


[PDF] Pilgrimage to Vallombrosa: From Vermont to Italy in the Footsteps of George Perkins Marsh (Under the Sign of Nature)

## Pilgrimage to Vallombrosa: From Vermont to Italy in the Footsteps of George Perkins Marsh (Under the Sign of Nature)

*John Elder*

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**John Elder : Pilgrimage to Vallombrosa: From Vermont to Italy in the Footsteps of George Perkins Marsh (Under the Sign of Nature)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all

praised *Pilgrimage to Vallombrosa: From Vermont to Italy in the Footsteps of George Perkins Marsh (Under the Sign of Nature)*:

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The first half of this book was really well written, engaging and a great read. Then it turned into a more academic voice that was less intriguing.

"Set aside your *Bella Tuscany*s and *Year in Provence*s for a different kind of travel book. *Pilgrimage to Vallombrosa* puts a walking stick in your hand and *Marsh's Man and Nature* in your knapsack, exploring how Italians have managed their natural and cultural heritage in ways that sustain both. John Elders poetic meditations on land and life demonstrate that only by searching beyond our familiar boundaries can we discover better ways of living back at home." Marcus Hall, author of *Earth Repair: A Transatlantic History of Environmental Restoration* "This collaboration between George Perkins Marsh and John Elder, between Vermont and Italy, between maple and olive is one of the smartest, soundest, deepest books about the relationship between people and nature that I've ever read. It will be a classic." Bill McKibben, author of *The End of Nature* "Elders impassioned pilgrimage shows us how to delight in messy wilderness, to secure a curative habitation of the world, and, with Marsh, to lend ecological nous to our gravest task: knowing ourselves and respecting one another. Let the maple seeds and olive stones of Elders visionary harvest restore to us a reflective and redemptory future." from the foreword by David Lowenthal  
The pivotal figure in *Pilgrimage to Vallombrosa* is the nineteenth-century diplomat and writer George Perkins Marsh, generally regarded as America's first environmentalist. Like Elder, Marsh was a Vermonter, and his diplomatic career took him for some years to Italy, where, witnessing the ecological devastation wrought upon the landscape by runaway deforestation and the plundering of other natural resources, he was moved to produce his famous manifesto, *Man and Nature*. Marsh drew parallels between the despoiled Italian environment and his home landscape of Vermont, warning that the latter was vulnerable to ecological woes of a similar magnitude if not carefully maintained and protected. In short, his was a prescient voice for stewardship. Elder follows in Marsh's footsteps along a trajectory running from Vermont to Italy, and at length fetches up at the managed forest of Vallombrosa. Punctuated throughout with learned and genial considerations of the poetry of Wordsworth, Basho, Dante, and Frost, Elders narrative takes up issues of sustainability as practiced locally, reports on family doings, and returns finally as did Marsh to Vermont, where he measures traditional stewardship values against more aggressive conservation-oriented measures such as the expansion of wilderness areas. John Elder, Professor of English and Environmental Studies at Middlebury College, is the author of *Reading the Mountains of Home* and *The Frog Run*.  
*Under the Sign of Nature: Explorations in Ecocriticism*

From Booklist  
Vermont native George Perkins Marsh was a significant member of the nineteenth-century conservation movement, and his *Man and Nature* (1864) has proven to be both prophetic and influential. His prose is rather dense and formal, however, so he has been overlooked of late. English professor and nature writer Elder sought to rectify that situation by following Marsh's footsteps both in Vermont and Italy, where Marsh served as U.S. ambassador. Elder traveled to Italy with his wife and juxtaposes their modern tale of academic research and appreciation against Marsh's experiences. Elder also mines the words of other early conservationists and traces the link between Marsh's pioneering work and that of others, such as Rachel Carson and Aldo Leopold. Elder's avid appreciation for and analyses of the places Marsh loved reveal the heart of a man who proved that concern for the environment was alive and well under Lincoln. Recommended for those interested in conservation and ecology.  
Colleen Mondor  
Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "[O]ne of the smartest, soundest, deepest books about the relationship between people and nature that I've ever read." -- Bill McKibben  
About the Author  
John Elder, Professor of English at Middlebury College, is the author of *Reading the Mountains of Home* and *The Frog Run*.