Beat Kümin, ‘Parish religion in late medieval and Reformation England: The evidence from churchwardens’ accounts’, in: Andrea Tilatti and Roberto Alloro (eds), Redde rationem: Contabilità parrocchiali tra medioevo e prima età moderna, Quaderni di Storia Religiosa XXI (Caselle di Sommacampagna: Cierre edizioni, 2016), 231-248

**Abstract**

This essay reviews the format, content and historiographical significance of English churchwardens’ accounts. Following methodological considerations and an introduction to parish organization, it argues that these sources – which survive in considerable numbers from the fourteenth century – have played a major part in recent reinterpretations of late medieval religion, local participation in government and the impact of the various Tudor Reformations. Little more than mundane lists of financial transactions by humble officials at first sight, accounts can shed light on topics as diverse as popular piety / politics, festive / musical culture, gender relations and poor relief. Not least thanks to closer scrutiny of churchwardens’ accounts, fifteenth-century parish life now appears as remarkably vibrant and sixteenth-century change as locally negotiated.