Baruch (Benedictus) de Spinoza

Philosophy 22N
Spring, 2004
G. J. Mattey
Vital Statistics

- Born, 1632, Amsterdam
- Died, 1677
- Single
- School-teacher
- Lens-grinder
- Led a solitary life
Important Events

• Circa 1639-49, attended the Talmud Torah school in Amsterdam

• 1649, dropped out of school to help in his family’s importing business

• 1652, studied Latin, natural philosophy, and Cartesian philosophy

• 1656, excommunicated from the Sephardic Jewish community for “monstrous deeds” and “abominable heresies,” temporarily expelled from Amsterdam
Important Events (cont.)

- Circa 1660, wrote *Short Treatise on God, Man and His Well-Being*
- 1662, probably finished *On the Emendation of the Intellect*
- 1663, published *Descartes’ Principles of Philosophy* and *Metaphysical Thoughts*
- 1670, anonymously published *Theological-Political Treatise*, condemned by Church Council of Amsterdam as “forged in Hell by a renegade Jew and the Devil”
Important Events (cont.)

- 1672, initiated a diplomatic mission to the French army, nearly killed by a mob as a spy
- 1673, turned down offer of Professorship of Philosophy at the University of Heidelberg
- 1674, *Theological-Political Treatise* banned in the Netherlands
- 1675, met with Leibniz, completed *Ethics*
- 1677, dies of “phthisis,” a lung disease probably caused by inhalation of glass dust
Important Events (cont.)

• 1677, *Ethics* published posthumously, along with
  - *Letters*
  - *Political Treatise*
  - *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*
  - *Grammatical Compendium of the Hebrew Language*