

Gassendi On Happiness

Post by “Joshua” of November 14, 2025 at 2:03 AM

Yes, that fragment is remarkably well-attested:

Quote

[06] They say that he wrote to many other women of pleasure and particularly to Leontion, with whom Metrodorus was also in love; and that in the treatise On the End of Life he wrote, *'I know not how I can conceive the good, if I withdraw the pleasures of taste and withdraw the pleasures of love and those of hearing and sight.'*

-Diogenes Laertius, *Lives and Opinions of Eminent Philosophers* Bailey Translation

Quote

Thus you speak: *"Nor can I form any notion of the chief good, abstracted from those pleasures which are perceived by taste, or from what depends on hearing music, or abstracted from ideas raised by external objects visible to the eye, or by agreeable motions, or from those other pleasures which are perceived by the whole man by means of any of his senses; nor can it possibly be said that the pleasures of the mind are excited only by what is good; for I have perceived men's minds to be pleased with the hopes of enjoying those things which I mentioned above, and with the idea that it should enjoy them without any interruption from pain."* And these are his exact words, so that any one may understand what were the pleasures with which Epicurus was acquainted.

-Cicero, *Tusculan Disputations*, Yonge Translation

Quote

I do not suppose, Velleius, that you are like some of the Epicureans, who are ashamed of those expressions of Epicurus, in which he openly avows that he has no idea of any good separate from wanton and obscene pleasures, which, without a blush, he names distinctly.

-Cicero, *On the Nature of the Gods*, Yonge Translation

Quote

For Epicurus says, without any concealment, but speaking with a loud voice, as it were, "*For I am not able to distinguish what is good if you once take away the pleasure arising from sweet flavours, and if you also take away amatory pleasures.*" For this wise man thinks that even the life of the intemperate man is an unimpeachable one, if he enjoys an immunity from fear, and also mirth. On which account also the comic poets, running down the Epicureans, attack them as mere servants and ministers of pleasure and intemperance.

-Athenaeus, *The Banquet of the Learned*, Yonge Translation