

The essay deals with the role of void in the Epicurean physics and asks two fundamental questions: What was void for Epicurus and why had he thought it must exist. As a reply to the first question two conceptions are possible – that the void means emptiness between atoms and that it means the space in general. Arguments are given for the claim that Epicurus operated both these concepts. The first one, an empty interval, is necessary for the possibility of motion in atomism and a wider notion of the space, among other reasons, seems to be too important for speaking about the first one.

The second question focuses on reasons for existence of the void. Atomists were convinced that it is necessary condition of possibility of locomotion. But why? There clearly is another possible explanation – motion could be enabled by fluid, matter the speciality of which is ability to change shape. However, examination of fluidity shows that it is provided by infinite divisibility of matter. The atomists' rejection of infinite divisibility then can be understood as their reason for rejecting possibility of fluid matter and thus for needing the void to explain motion.