The *De Sensibus* of Theophrastus is our chief authority for the physiological psychology of the Presocratics and our only authority for many details that throw light on other aspects of their theories. Its value is impaired by numerous difficulties in the text. Some of these are clearly due to damage suffered in transmission, and they may be solved by further study of the manuscripts. From the common errors of the fourteenth century P and F, for example, it is possible to reconstruct some of the characteristics of earlier manuscripts that caused the errors, and thereby to recover the earlier readings. But at best such reconstructions take us back only to an earlier minuscule form of the text, and there remain many problems for which no palaeographical solution seems likely. If these are to be solved, it must be on evidence from other sources.

The best evidence would, of course, be the original writings of the philosophers whose theories are discussed and the references to these theories by Theophrastus in his other works. However, few of the fragments of the Presocratics have a direct bearing on the more troublesome passages, and, aside from the account of Democritus' theory of the savor in Book VI of the *De Causis Plantarum*, there is little in Theophrastus that helps. For this purpose what is otherwise the least useful part of the *De Sensibus* may be the most useful, namely, the discussion of Plato's theory. This is based on the *Timaeus*. If Theophrastus' treatment of the *Timaeus* may be assumed to be typical of his treatment of the writings of all his predecessors, then a comparison of the parallel passages of the *Timaeus* and the *De Sensibus* may give a general indication of what is to be expected in the *De Sensibus* as a whole and may suggest methods of interpretation or restoration that may be applied to parts of the work in which no primary evidence for the doctrines has been preserved.

That Theophrastus did use the *Timaeus*, and no other work of Plato, cannot be doubted. He follows the order of Plato's presentation so exactly and with so many verbal similarities that, as Stratton has observed, one may almost see him at work with his *Timaeus* spread out before him. These similarities have already been put to use in removing several errors from the *De Sensibus*. At the other extreme, sometimes the *De Sensibus* is directly opposed to the *Timaeus*, and the difference can hardly be due to scribal error – as when Theophrastus says that Plato gave no
account of roughness and smoothness¹ and that Plato recognized only four savors.² In these cases there is no question about the text of Theophrastus. He has either overlooked or rejected the evidence of the Timaeus. In several passages, however, it is not at once clear whether the differences between the De Sensibus and the Timaeus are due to faults in the manuscripts or to Theophrastus' intention. The problem will be set out best if some of these passages are examined in detail.

I

The following is Plato's account of hot and cold with the relevant passage from the De Sensibus:

Plato, Timaeus, 61D - 62B

a) πρῶτον μὲν οὖν ἥ τοῦ περὶ θερμόν λέγομεν, ἔδωκεν δὲ διακρίνεται, τὴν διάκρισιν καὶ τομὴν αὐτοῦ περὶ τὸ σῶμα ἡμῶν γνωμομένην ἐννοηθέντες, ὅτι μὲν γὰρ ἐξύ τι τὸ πάθος, πάντες σχέδον αἰσθανόμεθα: τὴν δὲ λεπτότητα τῶν πλευρῶν καὶ γωνιῶν ἐξίσουται τῶν τε μορίων σμικρότητα, καὶ τῆς φορᾶς τὸ τάχος, οἷς πᾶσι σφοδρὸν ὅν καὶ τομὸν ἐξέως τὸ προστυχόν ἅλη τέμυτει, λογιστέον ἄνακμηναμένοις τὴν τοῦ σχήματος αὐτοῦ γένεσιν, ὅτι μάλιστα ἐκεῖνη καὶ οὐκ ἄλλη φύσις διακρίνουσα ἡμῶν κατὰ σμικρὰ τε τὰ σώματα κεραμαῖσοσα τοῦτό ὁ νῦν θερμὸν λέγομεν εἰκότως τὸ πάθημα καὶ τοὐνόμα παρέσχεν.

b) τὸ δ' ἐναντίον τούτων κατάδηλον ψυχρὸν δὲ ὅταν δὲ ὑγρότητα μὲν, ὃμως δὲ μηδὲν ἑπίδεες ἔστω

Theophrastus, De Sensibus, 83

a) Πλάτων δὲ θερμὸν μὲν εἶναι φησί τὸ διακρίνον δὲ οὔτετα τῶν γωνιῶν.

b) τὸ δ' ἐναντίον τούτων κατάδηλον ψυχρὸν δὲ ὅταν δὲ ὑγρότητα μὲν, ὃμως δὲ μηδὲν ἑπίδεες ἔστω

¹ Cf. De Sensibus, 83 (Dox. Graec., pp. 524, 28-525, 1) and Timaeus, 63 E 8 ff.
² Cf. De Sensibus, 84 (Dox. Graec., p. 525, 4-5), 89 (Dox. Graec., p. 526, 18-19) and Timaeus, 60 A 1-4, where Plato says that there are many savors and that only four have received names.