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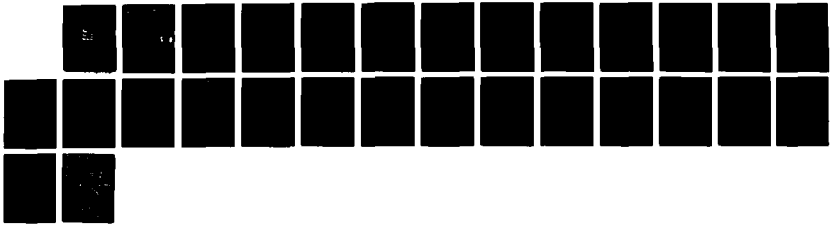

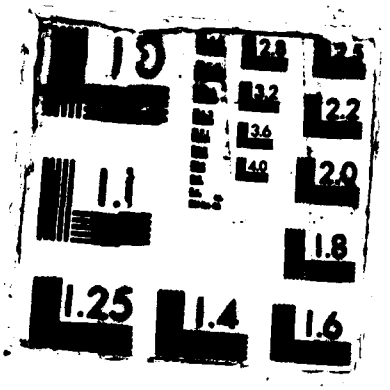
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Contract N-00014-86-C-0808

Technical Report No. 1

EFFECT OF PHYSICAL AND GEOMETRIC FACTORS ON THE IMPEDANCE OF ELECTROCHEMICAL POWER SOURCES

by

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Prepared for Publication

in the

Journal of the Electrochemical Society

Case Western Reserve University
Case Center for Electrochemical Sciences
and the Chemistry Department
Cleveland, Ohio 44106-2699

1 May, 1987

UNCLASSIFIED
SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE

AD-A183026

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE

1a. REPORT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION Unclassified	1b. RESTRICTIVE MARKINGS
2a. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION AUTHORITY	3. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF REPORT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited.
2b. DECLASSIFICATION / DOWNGRADING SCHEDULE	
4. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S) Technical Report No. 1	5. MONITORING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER(S)
6a. NAME OF PERFORMING ORGANIZATION Dept. of Chemistry and Case Center for Electrochemical Sciences 6b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)	7a. NAME OF MONITORING ORGANIZATION Office of Naval Research, Chemistry Code 472
6c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) Case Western Reserve University Cleveland, Ohio 44106-2699	7b. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code) Chemistry Progam 800 N. Quincy Street Arlington, VA 22217
8a. NAME OF FUNDING / SPONSORING ORGANIZATION Office of Naval Research 8b. OFFICE SYMBOL (If applicable)	9. PROCUREMENT INSTRUMENT IDENTIFICATION NUMBER Contract No. N00014-86-C-0808
8c. ADDRESS (City, State, and ZIP Code)	10. SOURCE OF FUNDING NUMBERS PROGRAM ELEMENT NO. / PROJECT NO. / TASK NO. / WORK UNIT ACCESSION NO

11. TITLE (Include Security Classification)
EFFECT OF PHYSICAL AND GEOMETRIC FACTORS ON THE IMPEDANCE OF ELECTROCHEMICAL POWER SOURCES

12. PERSONAL AUTHOR(S)
B. D. Cahan, M. L. Daroux and E. B. Yeager

13a. TYPE OF REPORT	13b. TIME COVERED	14. DATE OF REPORT (Year, Month, Day)	15. PAGE COUNT
Interim Technical	FROM _____ TO _____	87/5/1	14

16. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTATION
Submitted to the Journal of The Electrochemical Society

17. COSATI CODES		
FIELD	GROUP	SUB-GROUP

18. SUBJECT TERMS (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)
Impedance of Electrochemical Power Sources, Computer Modeling of Electrochemical Cells, Pulsed High-Power Batteries

19. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse if necessary and identify by block number)

Short-time transient behavior in the charge/discharge of small electrochemical power sources does not scale up for large systems. Calculations are presented which show that a number of commonly neglected physical and geometric factors, such as the skin effect and the distributed network impedance characteristics of the individual cells and cell assemblies, can severely limit performance. The impedance of individual cells has been calculated over a wide range of frequencies (10^2 - 10^8 Hz) using a modified semi-infinite strip-line model. The variables considered include the electrode and electrolyte conductivities, the electrolyte dielectric constant, the double-layer capacitance, and the distributed inductance and capacitance resulting from the cell geometry.

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(Keywords)

20. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY OF ABSTRACT	21. ABSTRACT SECURITY CLASSIFICATION
☐ UNCLASSIFIED/UNLIMITED ☒ SAME AS RPT ☐ DTIC USERS	Unclassified
22a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE INDIVIDUAL Dr. Robert Nowak	22b. TELEPHONE (Include Area Code) (202) 696-5075 22c. OFFICE SYMBOL

DD FORM 1473, 84 MAR 83 APR edition may be used until exhausted
All other editions are obsolete.

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE
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EFFECT OF PHYSICAL AND GEOMETRIC FACTORS ON THE IMPEDANCE OF ELECTROCHEMICAL POWER SOURCES

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INTRODUCTION:

Only a relatively small amount of work has been published [1-3] on the transient response of high power battery systems in the short time domain (0.1μs-10ms). Most laboratory studies deal with scaled down versions of large cells that are in practice usually employed to provide standby power or for applications in which continuous operation is required, rather than for pulse generation. In the present work, the impedance of an individual elementary cell has been calculated over a wide range of frequencies in order to show the effects of various physical and geometric factors that are significant at short discharge times.

The geometry chosen for the present calculations is the semi-infinite parallel plate cell with infinitely thick solid electrodes; a configuration commonly referred to in the electronics literature as a strip-line. Such a cell is illustrated schematically in Fig. 1. In order to carry out the impedance calculation this battery cell has been modelled as a transmission line containing uniformly distributed values of resistance, capacitance and inductance; quantities that can be determined directly from the physical characteristics chosen for the model. The transmission line can be analysed as a distributed network of differential elements [4], each having the equivalent circuit shown in Fig. 2. Its electrical characteristics can then be expressed in terms of a characteristic impedance Z_o, an attenuation constant α, and a phase shift β.

$$Z_o = \left(\frac{r_s+j\omega L_s}{g_p+j\omega C_p}\right)^{1/2} \qquad \ldots.(1)$$

where r_s is the series resistance, g_p is the shunt conductance, L_s is the series inductance, and C_p is the shunt capacitance, all per unit length.

The propagation constant γ for the transmission line shown in Fig. 2 is given by the expression

$$\gamma = [\,(r_s + j\omega L_s)\cdot(g_p + j\omega C_p)\,]^{1/2} \qquad \ldots.(2)$$

The propagation constant can also be written in terms of its real and imaginary parts, as

$$\gamma = \alpha + j\beta \qquad \ldots.(3)$$

The real part, α, is the attenuation constant and is related to the penetration length of the perturbation (along the z axis in Figure 1). β is the phase constant. The attentuation constant is given by the expression

$$\alpha = r_s/2Z_o + g_p Z_o/2 \qquad \ldots.(4)$$

For a particular frequency all but 1/e of the total current is drawn from a distance $1/\alpha$ from the terminals. This distance is referred to as the penetration length. The ratio of currents between points O and X, separated by a distance x, for a wave going from O to X, is

$$I_x / I_o = e^{-\alpha x} \qquad \ldots.(5)$$

In the corresponding time domain, this implies that at short times almost all the current is generated within about one penetration length (i.e., in the regions closest to the current collection terminals). Regions further along the z axis in Fig. 1 make little or no contribution. The utilization increases with time, but for short times a cell need have a length of only on the order of 2 or 3 times the penetration length in order to show the behaviour of a semi-inifite cell.

The above treatment yields the impedance as a function of frequency, but what is preferred in practice is the current/voltage response as a function of time when a cell or battery is placed on load. In principle it should be possible to compute the transient response by multiplying the impedance function by the transform of the perturbation and carrying out an inverse transformation on the product. This will be the subject of a future paper.

ESTIMATION OF PARAMETERS

There are four parameters, r_s, g_p, L_s and C_p in the lumped network representation of a unit section of transmission line shown in Fig. 1. The physical components of such a cell are illustrated schematically in Fig. 1, and the corresponding equivalent circuit is given in Fig. 3. In order to calculate the impedance, Fig. 3, the equivalent circuit representation of the physical components, must be translated into the form of Fig. 1.

The values of the parameters in Fig. 3 can be obtained from the physical properties chosen for the model as follows: r_s and L_s are modified by the skin effect [5]. The magnetic field resulting from current flow in a cell configured as a transmission line confines the current to the outer layer (skin) of the conductors. This is seen at high frequencies as an exponential decrease in current density in a conductor as the distance away from the surface increases. The equivalent skin depth, d, is defined as that depth over which a current density equal to 0.707 of the surface current density can be considered to be distributed uniformly.

$$d = 1/(\sigma\pi f\mu)^{1/2} \quad \ldots.(6)$$

where σ is the conductivity in $\Omega^{-1}.m^{-1}$, f is the frequency in Hz, and μ is the permeability in Henries.m^{-1}. Thus, even for an infinitely thick plate, at high frequencies all but 1/e of the current will be carried by a depth d of the outer region.*

The series inductance arises from the geometry of the conductors and is given, when the skin depth d (or the thickness of the electrodes themselves for finite thickness electrodes) is small with respect to the cell width W, by

$$L_s = 1.255\times10^{-6}\cdot u/W \quad \ldots.(7)$$

where u is the electrode spacing, and L_s has units of Henries/m. The series resistance for the infinitely thick electrodes assumed is dominated by the skin effect resistance r_{sk}, which is given by

$$r_{sk} = 3.974\times10^{-3}\cdot\rho_m^{1/2}\cdot f^{1/2}/W \quad \ldots.(8)$$

where ρ_m is the resistivity of both electrodes in Ω-m, and r_{sk} has units of Ω/m. In the present model it is assumed that all plates and current collectors are infinitely thick, so r_s is determined solely by r_{sk} which in turn depends on the skin depth and on the conductivity of the electrodes (i.e. the calculations assume the best case). For example, the skin depth for copper at 6×10^5Hz is 0.6mm and the resistance increases above that calculated using equation (7) as the plate thickness approaches and becomes smaller than this value. It should be noted that for electrodes of lower conductivity (because of either intrinsic conductivity or porosity) the skin depth increases in proportion to the square root of the resistivity. In consequence, the effective resistance will only increase in proportion to the square root of an increase in electrode resistivity.

It should be noted that r_{sk} is a function of frequency although by definition a real resistance is frequency invariant, yet the phase angle remains zero. This is in apparent contradiction of the Kramers-Kroenig relations [7], but it must be recognised that r_{sk} is only an effective resistance and is a result of the nonuniform distribution of current density into a conductor at AC frequencies.

The parallel components comprise terms for the electrode interfaces in series with terms for the electrolyte. The interfacial components are represented by the parallel combination of a Faradaic resistance, r_F, and a double-layer capacitance, C_{dl}. The electrolyte terms are the Ohmic resistance, r_E, and in parallel the dielectric capacitance, C_E, where [5]

$$C_E = \epsilon.\epsilon_o.W/u \quad \ldots.(9)$$

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*NOTE: The skin depth is often surprisingly small. Sixty hertz power transmission lines are rarely larger than two skin depths in diameter ($d_{Cu[60Hz]}$ = 6mm). Increasing the diameter of the wire decreases the resistance in proportion to the circumference rather than to the cross-sectional area.[6]

ϵ is the dielectric constant of the electrolyte, and C_E is in units of Farads/m^2. In the model discussed here, the interface is considered to be smooth.

The series impedances for the interfaces and for the electrolyte must then be combined in series and then converted to a complex admittance of the form $g_p + jwC_p$ for use in equation (3). It should be noted that g_p and C_p here do not correspond to any simple physical quantities.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION :

The strip-line cell shown in Fig. 1 has been modelled as a transmission line. The impedance per unit width and length has been computed as a function of frequency for different values of electrode and electrolyte conductivity and cell thickness. For the purposes of these initial calculations, the case where no Faradaic processes are occurring has been considered; that is the Faradaic resistance, r_F in Fig. 3, has been considered to be infinite. A constant, frequency-independent double-layer capacitance of 50uF/cm^2 has been used, and it has been assumed that the electrodes are infinitely thick so that the series resistance is equal to r_{sk}. The cell is assumed to be infinitely long, although only a small fraction of this length will actually be able to deliver current to a load at short times or high frequencies. The penetration length has been calculated as a function of frequency for each set of conditions.

The results are presented as Bode plots for log Z, the logarithm of the modulus of the complex impedance (equivalent to log $|Z_o|$), the phase angle θ, and the penetration length (equal to $1/\alpha$ - equation (5)).

Depending on the values of the physical variables chosen for the calculation, the equivalent circuit shown in Figure 2 can be simplified to yield a number of limiting cases. If ωL_s and ωC_p are small with respect to r_s and g_p, respectively, then the characteristic impedance, Z_o, will be resistive in nature. If ωL_s and ωC_p are large with respect to r_s and g_p, then the circuit will reduce to an LC network and Z_o will again be resistive. If ωC is small with respect to g_p only then the circuit reduces to an RL network and Z_o will show a positive phase shift, while if ωL is small with respect to r_s only then the circuit reduces to an RC network and Z_o has a negative phase shift. The results of the calculations presented here indicate that, depending on the frequency range of interest and the values of the physical variables chosen, a number of these different limiting cases as well as intermediate behaviour will be observed with real cells.

Figure 4 is a set of Bode plots calculated for electrode resistivities ranging from 1.7×10^{-6} to 1.7×10^{-1} Ω.cm. It may be noted that Cu has a resistivity of 1.7×10^{-6} Ω.cm. The cell thickness is 0.01cm, while the electrolyte resistivity has been set high at 1.0×10^{10} Ω.cm. This latter value gives the limiting case where ωC_p is large with respect to g_p. Figure 4 shows that at high frequencies, for the lower values of ρ_M, ωL_s is much greater than the series resistance, r_s, and the behaviour of the cell approaches that of a pure LC strip line. (It can be seen from equation (1) that if r_s=g_p=0, then the $j\omega$ factors cancel and Z_o becomes wholly real.) Z

approaches a constant, purely resistive, value of about 5Ω (determined largely by the values chosen for the cell thickness and the electrolyte dielectric constant), while θ tends to zero.

For more resistive electrodes and at lower frequencies, the contribution from the series resistance term is larger, and the overall behaviour becomes capacitative. The impedance increases, while θ tends to -45°. For Cu, for example, Z begins to increase at a frequency of about 10^6Hz. It might be expected that as r_s becomes dominant at low frequencies (since r_{sk} decreases in proportion to only the square root of f) and/or as the resistivity of the electrode increases, the behaviour of the transmission line would approach that of an RC network. For this case the Kramers-Kroenig relations [4] predict that when θ goes to -45°, log Z should decrease with frequency with a slope of -1/2. However Figure 4 shows that the computed value of log Z only decreases with a slope of -1/4. The probable explanation for this behaviour is that not only the values of the circuit components but also the equivalent circuit representation that is applicable changes with frequency. This result provides a further illustration of the necessity of predicting the time or frequency dependent behaviour of distributed systems from computations based on a complete model, rather than on intuitive extrapolations from steady state behaviour. It is not in general valid to replace a distributed network by a single simple equivalent circuit. In the model used here, r_s continues to change with frequency because an infinite electrode thickness has been assumed. If instead, a finite plate thickness is assumed, then once the skin depth exceeds this thickness (at low frequencies - see equation (8)), r_s should tend to a constant value and the slope of log Z should tend to -1/2.

The penetration lengths are also shown in Fig. 4, and it can be seen that for this case of a highly resistive electrolyte they are relatively large over almost the whole frequency range. At low frequencies they decrease by less than an order of magnitude as the electrode resistivity increases by six orders of magnitude. At the higher frequencies electrode resistivity has almost no effect on the penetration length.*

Figure 5 shows the same calculation as that shown in Figure 4 performed for a cell thickness of 0.1 cm. It can be seen that the resulting set of Bode plots have the same shape, but that the impedance curves have been shifted upwards (to higher impedances), and both the log Z and the θ curves have been translated to the left, i.e. to lower frequencies. The penetration length is increased slightly at lower frequencies. These changes in the limiting behaviour are the result of the order of magnitude decrease in the dielectric capacitance of the cell corresponding to the order of magnitude increase in electrode spacing. Because this quantity is much smaller than the double-layer capacity, it dominates the value of C_p. (See Figure 3.) The limiting value of Z increases because C_p decreases and also because L_s increases with the increase in spacing (equation (1)).

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* NOTE: The calculation above corresponds to the case of a cell having a highly-resistive (e.g. nonaqueous) electrolyte and indicates that significant currents can still be drawn. The calculation also applies to a capactitor having a configuration corresponding to this strip line, which will also demonstrate resistive behaviour at high frequencies and a significant increase in impedance at low frequencies.

Figure 6 shows the effect of varying the electrolyte resistivity over the range 10^{-2} to 10^{3} Ω.cm when the electrodes are highly conductive. The cell thickness is 0.1 cm, and ρ_M is 1.7×10^{-6} Ω.cm. Over a wide frequency range, from 10^2 to 10^8 Hz depending on the value of ρ_E, g_p is much larger than ωC_p and the transmission line shows a positive phase shift. This region is characterised by log Z increasing with increasing frequency with a slope of 1/2, while the phase angle tends to +45°. This is the behaviour expected for an LR stripline. The frequency at which this behavior is seen depends on the value of ρ_E, shifting to lower frequencies as ρ_E increases. At still lower frequencies r_s becomes large with respect to ωL_s, and log Z reaches a constant value (about 0.002 Ω) characteristic of purely resistive behaviour. Correspondingly, θ decreases to zero.

At frequencies above the LR region ωC_p becomes increasingly significant, and as it exceeds g_p the behaviour of the line again becomes resistive (see the discussion of an LC network above). Log Z tends to a new limiting value, almost two orders of magnitude greater, and θ decreases to zero.

Figure 6 also shows that the penetration length is strongly dependent on the electrolyte resistivity, decreasing as ρ_E decreases.

Figure 7 shows the effect of electrolyte resistivity when the electrodes have a relatively low conductivity. Again ρ_E ranges from 10^{-2} to 10^3 Ω.cm, while the electrode resistivity is 3.5×10^{-3} Ω-cm, corresponding to an electrode material such as carbon. The electrolyte thickness is 0.1 cm.

Over limited frequency ranges, the behavior of the cell can be described by simplified versions of the equivalent circuit shown in Fig. 2, and these are illustrated in Fig. 7 for the curve corresponding to an electrolyte resistivity of 10^2 Ω-cm. At high frequencies (region E), this transmission line behaves like an LC network and Z_o has the characteristics of a pure resistance (see equation (1)). Log Z is constant, and the phase shift, θ, approaches zero. As the frequency decreases (region D) ωC_p becomes less than g_p and the behavior becomes that of the LR circuit shown. The impedance decreases, and θ becomes positive. As the frequency continues to decrease (region C) ωL_s becomes comparable to r_s and the equivalent circuit tends to become purely resistive as shown (region B). At the lowest frequencies shown (region A) the interfacial terms begin to become important. Here ωC_{dl} starts to become the dominant parallel component and the impedance increases again, while θ becomes negative. This may be a consequence of the assumption of infinitely long plates and infinitely thick electrodes. As the skin depth continues to increase with decreasing frequency, the penetration length may become limiting. It should be noted that the Kramers-Kroenig relationship does not hold here either, since α depends on r_s which is frequency dependent.

As in the previous example the penetration length is dominated, particularly at high frequencies, by ρ_E. The effect of the lower value for ρ_M appears as a slight decrease in the penetration length at low frequencies.

From the examples above, it may be concluded that at high

frequencies/short times the behaviour of the simple cell modelled here is limited by the impedance resulting from the physical geometry of the cell components. These factors must therefore be given strong consideration when designing batteries for high-power short-duration pulse applications. The continuation of this work is now in progress to extend the model to take into account the effects of the electrochemical interface and more complex cell geometries.

SUMMARY :

1. The impedance resulting from the physical geometry of the components will limit the high frequency/short time performance of a cell and must therefore be considered in addition to the electrode kinetics in designing short duration pulse batteries.

2. In order to take these effects into account in estimating battery performance, it is necessary to model the battery as a complex distributed network. The behavior of these networks does not follow intuitive concepts applicable to steady-state behaviour or to systems that can be uniquely represented by a simple equivalent circuit. Depending on the condition chosen, any of the variables considered, i.e., electrode resistance, electrolyte resistance, or cell thickness, can affect the performance of a cell.

3. The calculated values of penetration length indicate that at short times/high frequencies current can only be drawn from the regions closest to the terminals of most conventional large battery cells, so that only a fraction of their total power is available. This problem becomes greater as the size of the battery is increased since the ratio of $1/\alpha$ to cell dimensions becomes increasingly unfavorable. Transients measured for small test cells should not necessarily be expected to scale as the cell/battery size is increased.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: This research has been supported by ONR through a subcontract with Eveready Battery Co. We thank Dr G. Blomgren, Dr J. Bailey and Ms J. Boyd for helpful disscussions.

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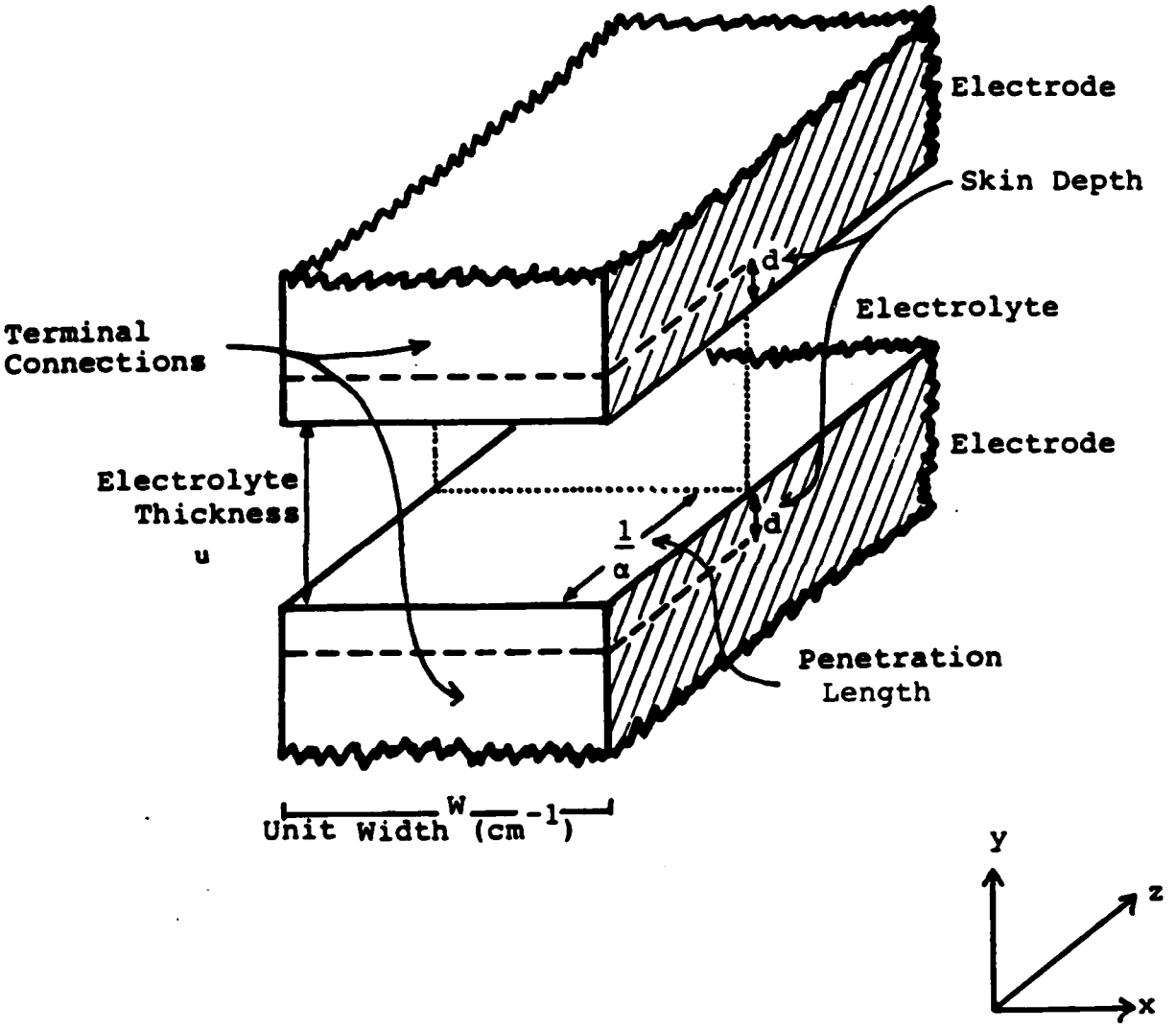

FIGURE 1 : Physical Geometry of Semi-infinite Parallel Plate (Strip-line) Cell

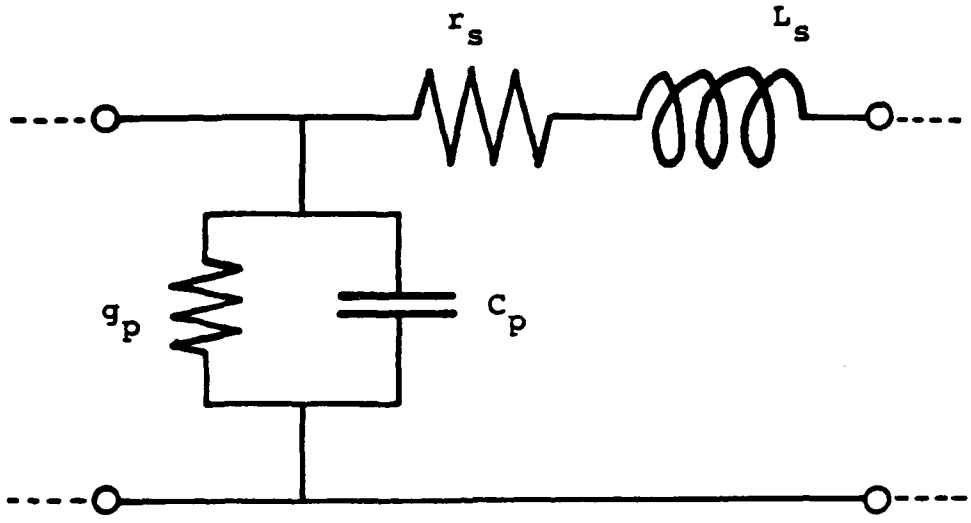

FIGURE 2 : Equivalent Circuit of Individual Element in Distributed Network Analysis of Strip-line Cell

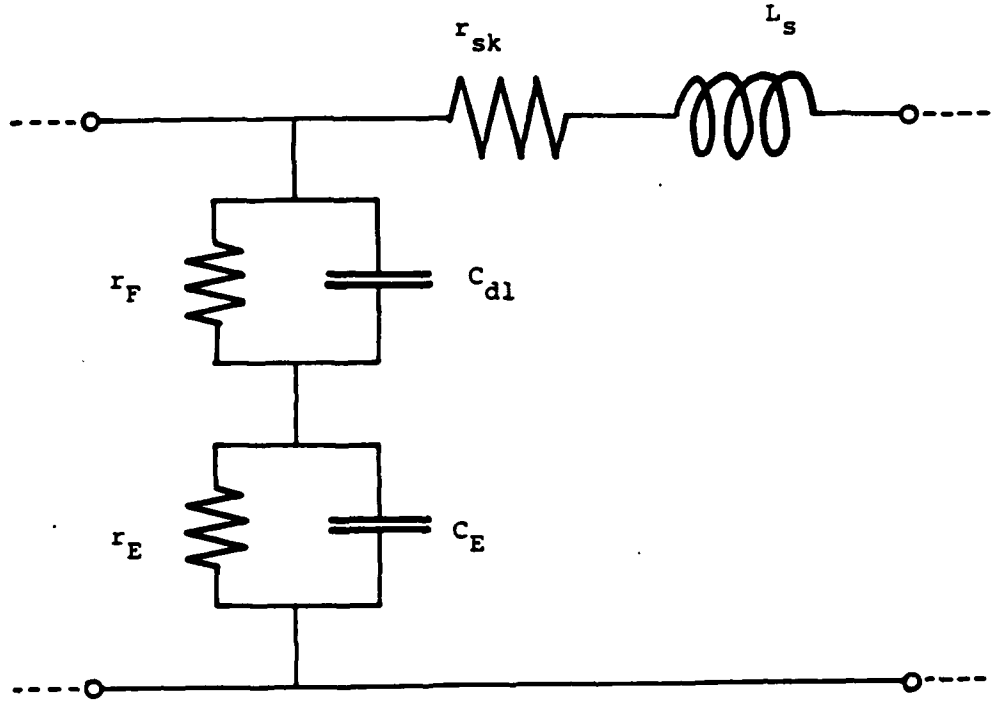

FIGURE 3 : Equivalent Circuit Representation of Physical Components of Strip-line Battery Cell

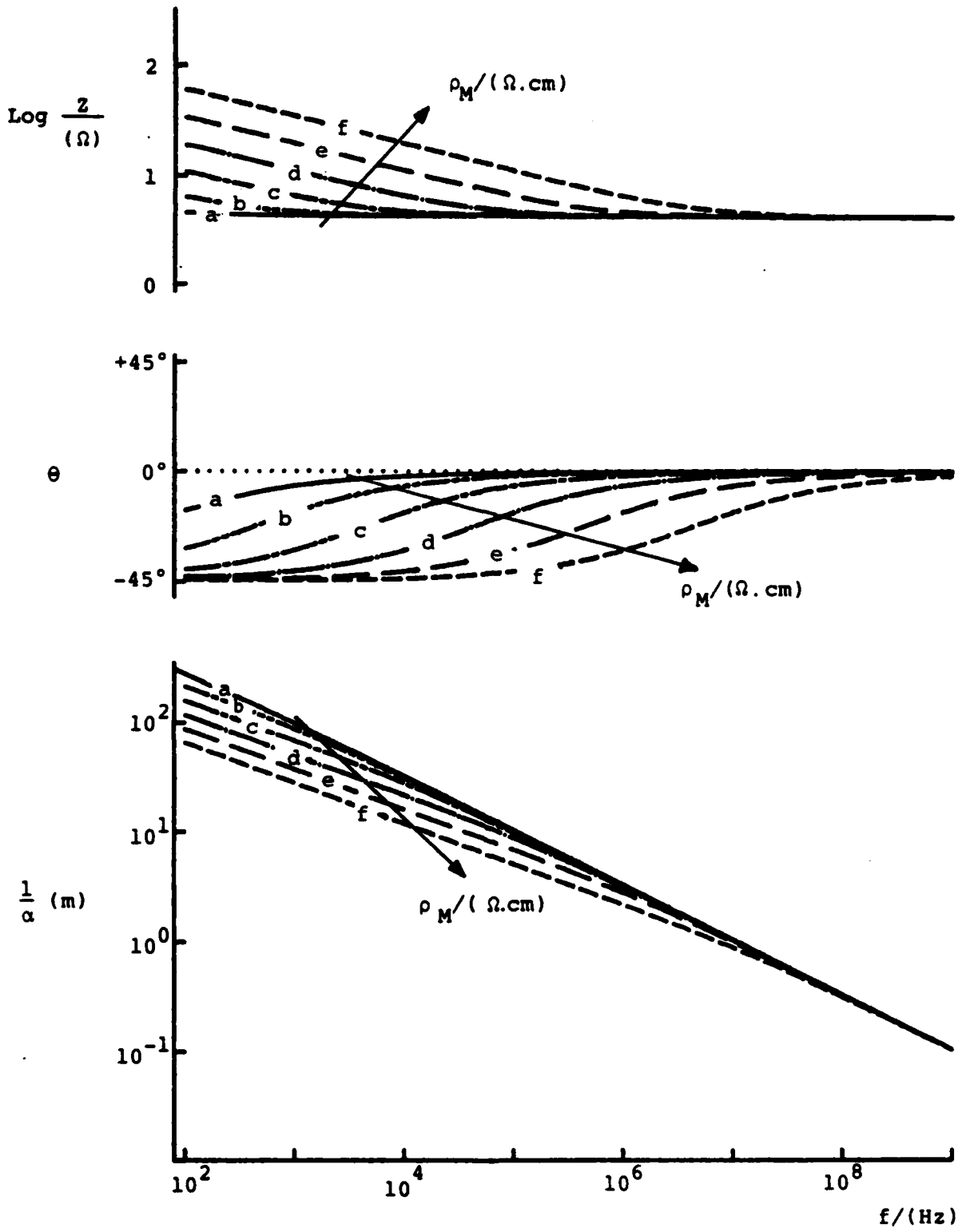

FIGURE 4 : Bode Plots showing a) log Z, b) θ and c) $1/\alpha$ (penetration length), as a Function of Frequency. Calculated for $\rho_m = 1.7\times10^{-6}$(curve (a)) - 1.7×10^{-1}(curve (f)) Ω-cm, u = 0.01 cm, ρ_E(electrolyte resistivity) = 10^{10} Ω-cm, W = 1.0 cm, C_{dl} = 50 uF/cm^2, $C_E = 7.17\times10^{-5}$ μF/cm^2, $L_s = 1.255\times10^{-9}$ H/m.

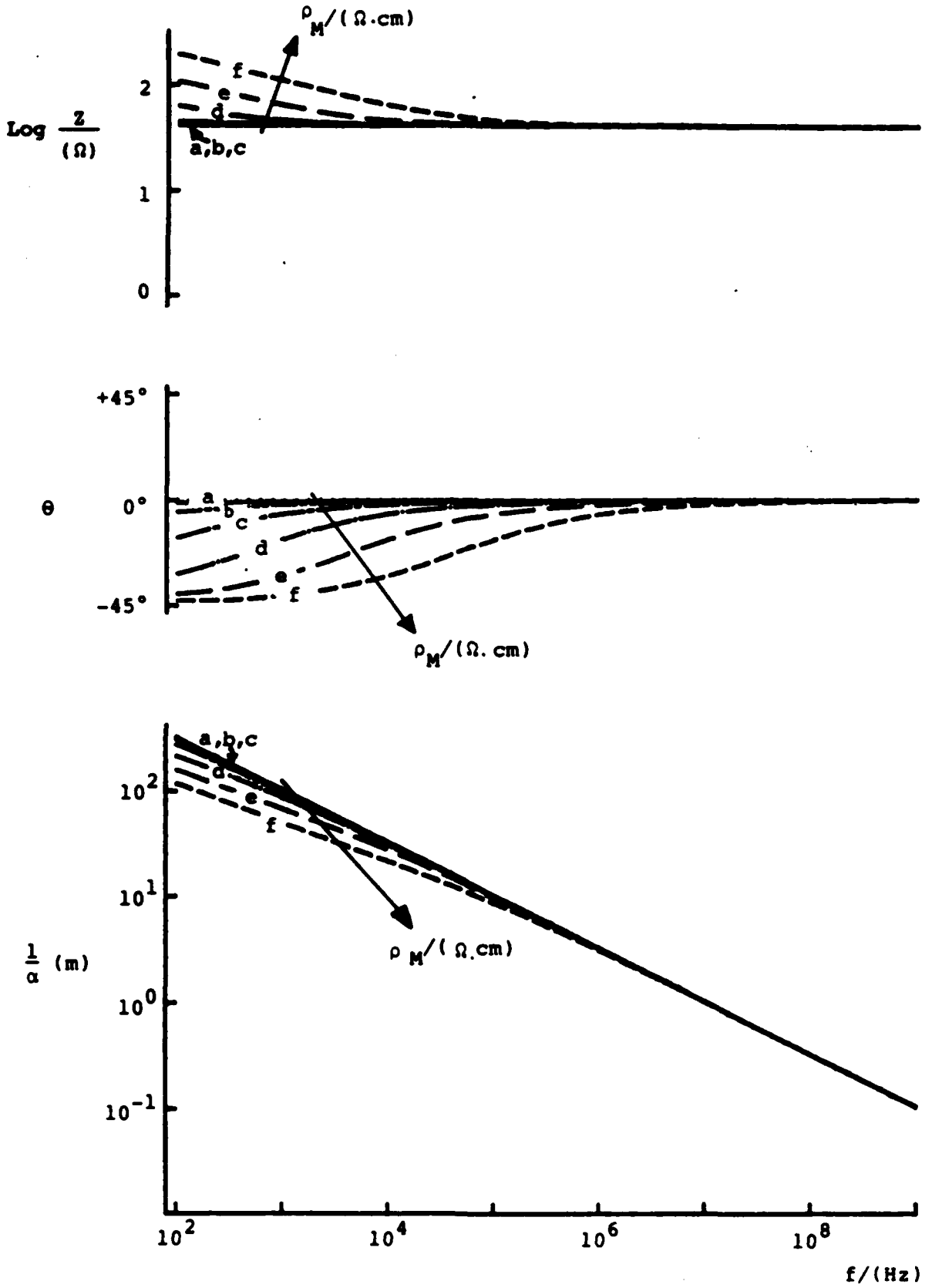

FIGURE 5 : Bode plots for $\rho_E = 10^{10}$ Ω.cm, u = 0.1 cm, W = 1.0 cm, $C_{dl} = 50\ \mu F/cm^2$, $C_E = 7.17\times10^{-5}\ \mu F/cm^2$, $L_s = 1.255\times10^{-9}$ H/m, $\rho_m = 1.7\times10^{-6}$(curve (a)) - - 1.7×10^{-1}(curve (f)) Ω-cm.

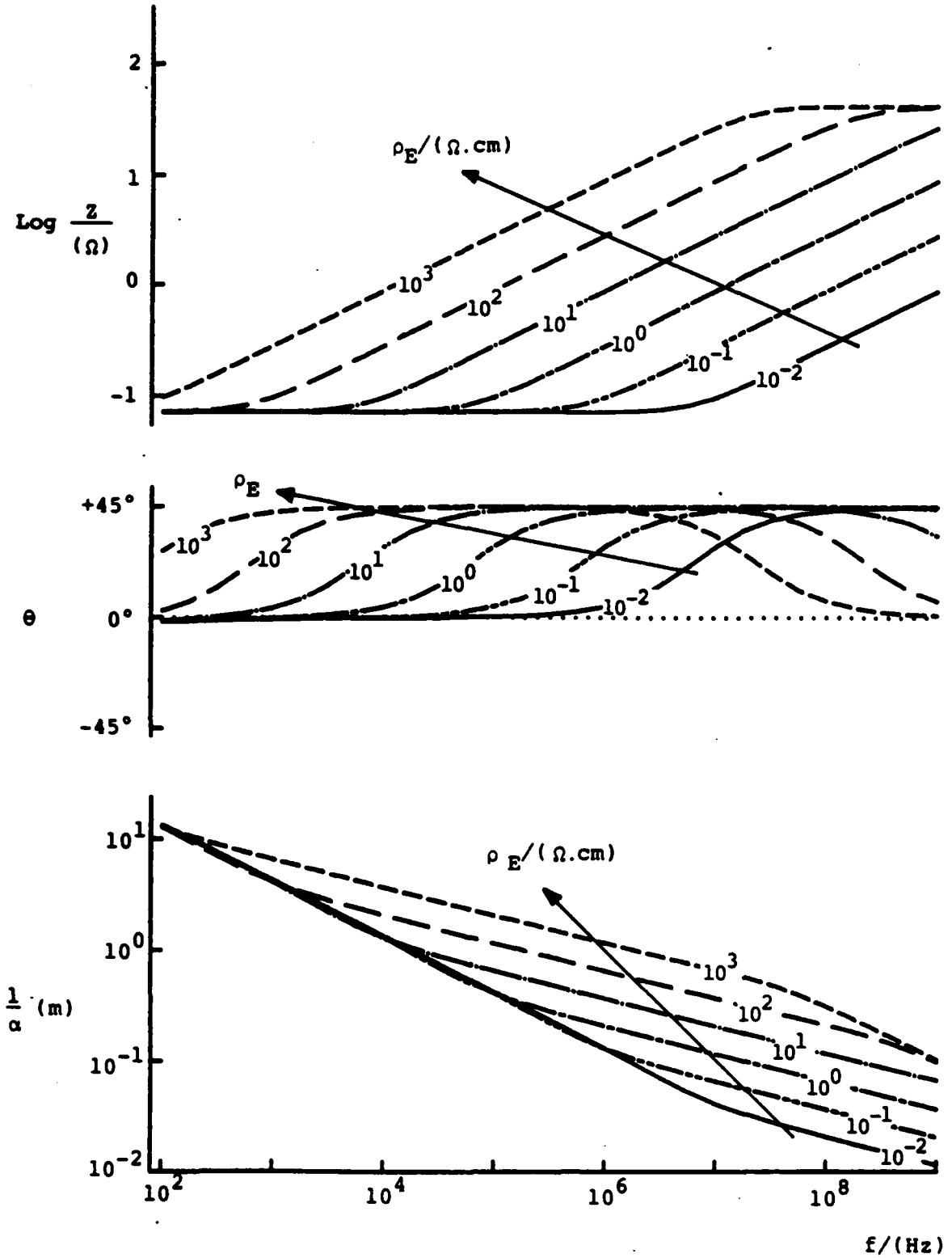

FIGURE 6 : Bode plots for ρ_m = 1.7×10^{-6} Ω-cm, ρ_E = 10^{-2} - 10^3 Ω-cm, u = 0.1cm, W = 1.0 cm, C_{dl} = 50 μF/cm^2, C_E = 7.17×10^{-5} μF/cm^2, L_s = 1.255×10^{-9} H/m.

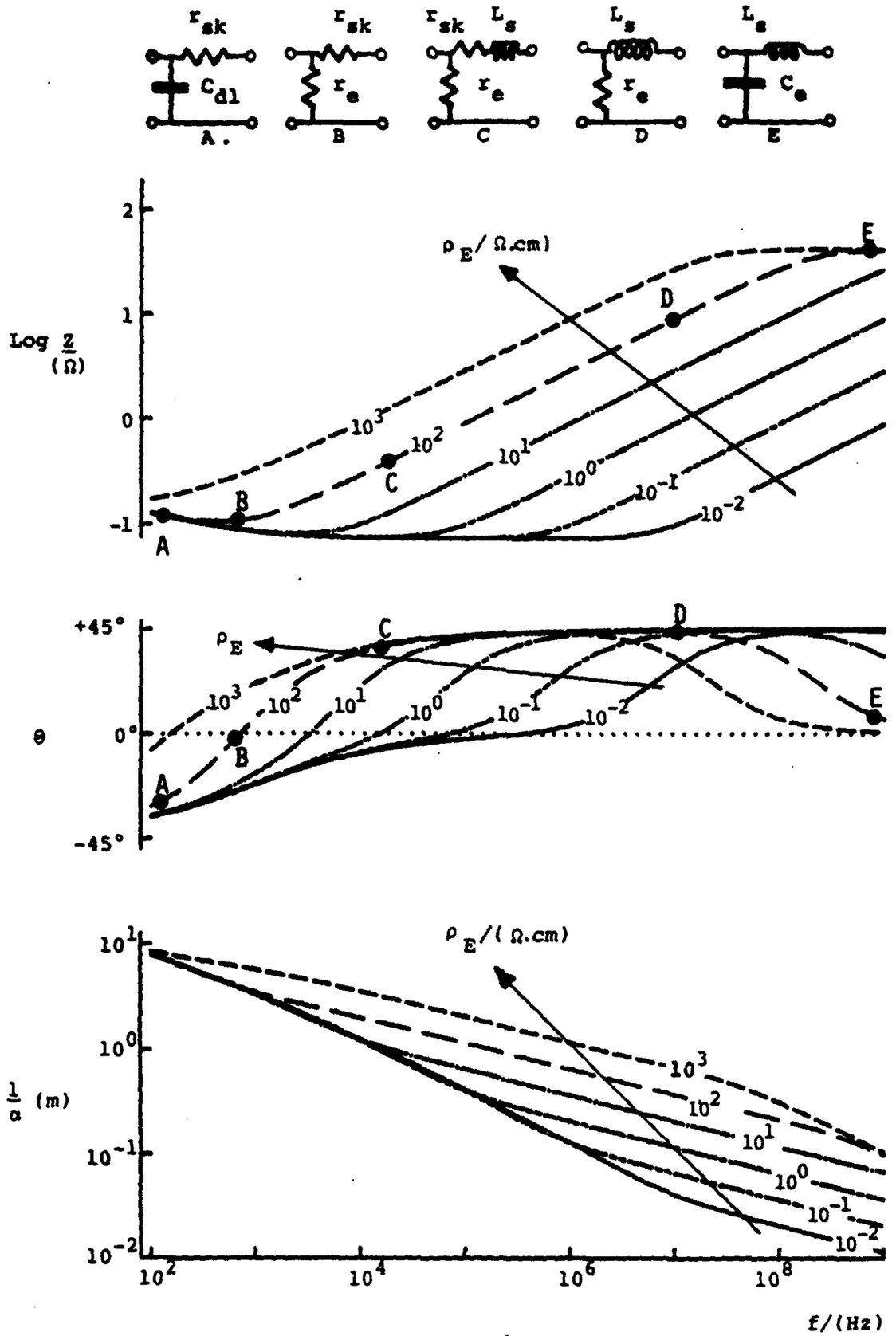

FIGURE 7 : Bode plots for $\rho_m = 3.5\times10^{-3}$ Ω-cm, $\rho_E = 10^{-2}$ - 10^3 Ω-cm, u = 0.1 cm, W = 1.0 cm, $C_{dl} = 50$ μF/cm^2, $C_E = 7.17\times10^{-5}$ μF/cm^2, $L_s = 1.255\times10^{-9}$ H/m.

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