

GEOEEM WS 15/16

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0 Introduction

Common to each method is the fact that the current flow is used in the subsurface. The aim is the determination of the conductivity distribution of the subsurface from the Earth's surface down to several 100 km depth.

Application areas:

- Near surface exploration (0 - 300 m depth):
 - Application for the environment: Waste site exploration, search for suitable landfill sites, ...
 - Groundwater exploration
 - Archaeology
 - Exploration for deposits, engineering applications (e.g. cavity detection,...)
- Exploration of deep structures (> 300 m)
 - Geothermal fields, oil and gas exploration
 - tectonic questions, shear zones
 - deep crust and upper mantle

0.1 Classification of methods

Classifications possible as:

- According to the source (artificial or natural)
- Inclusion of magnetic field or not?
- Direct current or alternating current?

DC-resistivity methods: Direct current resistivity (DC), Induced polarization (IP), Self potential (SP)

Electromagnetic methods:

- *Frequency domain:* Magnetotellurics (MT), Audiomagnetotellurics (AMT), Controlled source AMT (CSAMT), Radiomagnetotellurics (RMT)
- *Time domain:* Transient electromagnetics (TEM), Long offset transient electromagnetics (LOTEM)

Electromagnetic methods using high frequencies ($f > 10$ MHz): Ground penetrating radar (GPR)

1 Conductivity

The conductivity σ of the minerals in the nature covers a range of 25 decades! For example:

$$\begin{aligned} 10^{-18} S/m &\rightarrow \text{Diamond} \\ 10^7 S/m &\rightarrow \text{Copper} \end{aligned}$$

Instead of the conductivity, the resistivity $\rho = \frac{1}{\sigma} \Omega m$ is often used.

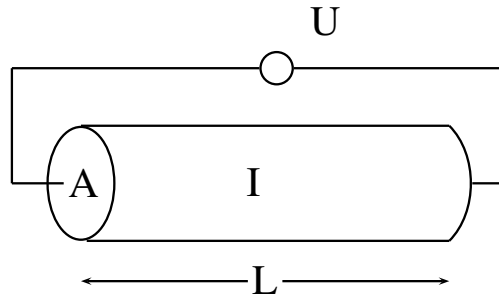


Figure 1.1: Schematic derivation of Ohm's law

Definition: Ohm's law

Let us consider a rock sample of length L , resistivity ρ and cross section A . A current $I[A]$ flows by applying a voltage $U[V]$ to the rock sample:

$$\begin{aligned}
 I &= \frac{AU}{\rho L} \\
 \Leftrightarrow \rho \underbrace{\frac{I}{A}}_{\text{current density } j} &= \underbrace{\frac{U}{L}}_{\text{electric Field } E} \\
 \vec{j}\rho &= \vec{E} \tag{1.1}
 \end{aligned}$$

We measure I and U , A and L are known, so we can calculate ρ .

1.1 Mechanisms of electrical conductivity

Metallic conductivity: Current flows by free electrons $\rho \propto T$

Electrolytic conductivity: Charge carriers are cations and anions: ρ decreases with temperature T .

Semi-conductors: Charge carriers must be activated by heat, light or EM-radiation. Strongly dependent on temperature T . Important for mantle (deep earth structures)

Boundary layer conductivity: Occurs due to the interaction of the pore liquid with the rock matrix. This is the source of SP-anomalies!

2 DC-resistivity method

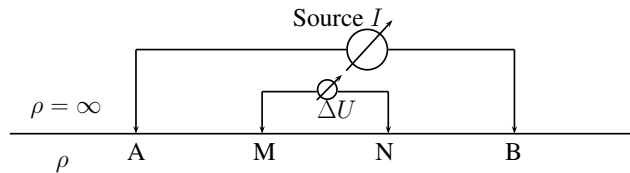


Figure 2.1: Four point measurement

Resistivity ρ of the subsurface derived from I (which is known), ΔU (which is measured) and the geometrical factor K (which is also known).

Frequently used electrode arrays

Industrial standard of measuring is via an *Multielectrode array*.

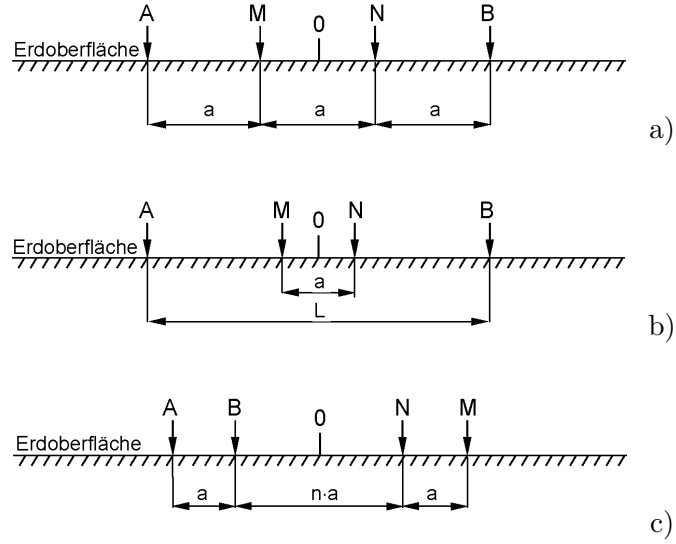


Figure 2.2: a) Wenner, Half-Wenner; b) Schlumberger, Half-Schlumberger; c) Dipole-dipole, source???

2.1 Basic equations of DC-resistivity

The first assumption of DC-resistivity methods and the major difference to EM-methods is the assumption of stationary currents:

$$\frac{\partial}{\partial t} = 0$$

The fields do not depend on time.

Looking at the *Maxwell's equations*:

$$\nabla \times \vec{E} = \frac{\partial \vec{B}}{\partial t} = 0 \quad (2.1)$$

This means irrotational electric field and from that follows, that the electric field vector can be derived by a scalar potential:

$$\vec{E} = -\nabla V \quad (2.2)$$

Insert equation (2.2) into eq. (1.1):

$$\vec{j} = -\sigma \nabla V \quad (2.3)$$

Continuity equation:

$$\nabla \cdot \vec{j} + \frac{\partial q}{\partial t} = 0 \quad (2.4)$$

Now new charges are generated in the course of time

$$\nabla \cdot \vec{j} = 0 \quad (2.5)$$

which is valid outside of the source.

If we insert eq. (2.3) into (2.5):

$$\begin{aligned} -\nabla \cdot (\sigma \nabla V) &= 0 \\ \nabla \sigma \nabla V + \sigma \nabla^2 V &= 0 \end{aligned}$$

$\nabla \sigma = 0$ for areas with constant conductivity, so:

$$\nabla^2 V = 0 \quad (2.6)$$

which is called the *Laplace-equation*, the basic equation of DC-resistivity.

Derivation of solutions of this elliptic partial differential equation using different boundary conditions: Assume a current source with strength I at point \vec{r}_0 , then the spatial current distribution can be given as: $\nabla \cdot \vec{j} = I\delta(\vec{r} - \vec{r}_0)$ and so:

$$\nabla \cdot (\sigma \nabla V) = -I\delta(\vec{r} - \vec{r}_0) \quad (2.7)$$

This equation can be solved numerically for arbitrary distribution of conductivity ratio.

2.1.1 Potential of a current electrode

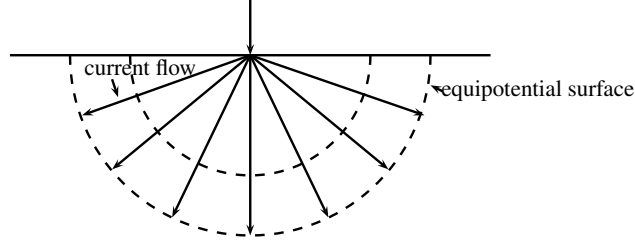


Figure 2.3: Single current source

Using *Ohm's law*: $\vec{E} = \rho \vec{j} = \rho \frac{I}{2\pi r^2}$, where $2\pi r^2$ is the surface of the half sphere. Using $E = -\frac{dV}{dr}$ follows the potential of a homogeneous half space:

$$V = \frac{\rho I}{2\pi r} \quad (2.8)$$

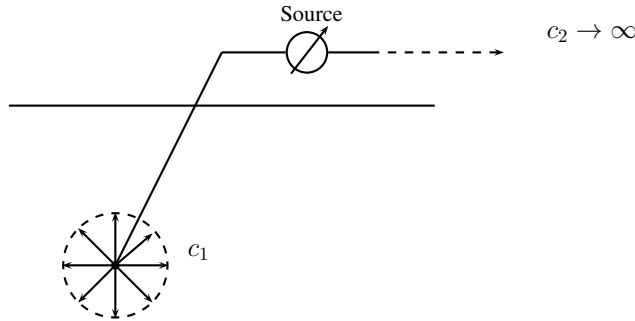


Figure 2.4: Mise-à-la-Masse method

In the case of the *Mise-à-la-Masse method* the potential of the homogeneous full space is:

$$V = \frac{\rho I}{4\pi r} \quad (2.9)$$

The same result can be derived by using the Laplace-equation (2.6) and the use of spherical coordinates:

$$\nabla^2 V = \frac{d^2 V}{dr^2} + \frac{2}{r} \frac{dV}{dr}$$

From the symmetry of the system the potential is a function of the distance to the source r only. Multiplying by r^2 and integrating, we get:

$$\frac{dV}{dr} = \frac{c_1}{r^2}$$

Integrating over r again leads to the solution:

$$V = -\frac{c_1}{r} + c_2 \quad c_1, c_2 = \text{const.}$$

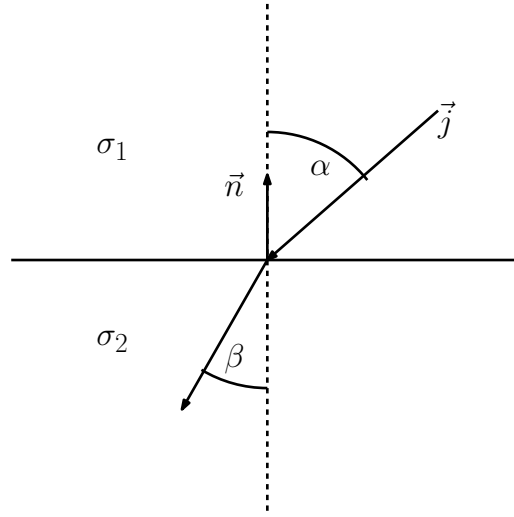


Figure 2.5: Boundary with dip angles GEOING s5

To determine the constants we have to use boundary conditions: From $\lim_{r \rightarrow \infty} V(r) = 0$ follows that $c_2 = 0$. Using the current density: $j = \frac{I}{A} \Leftrightarrow I = jA$:

$$I = 4\pi r^2 j = -4\pi r^2 \sigma \frac{dV}{dr} = -4\pi \sigma c_1$$

From this equation we can derive c_1 :

$$V = \frac{I\rho}{4\pi r} \quad (2.10)$$

Boundary equations

Boundary with different conductivities.

Two boundary conditions which must hold at any contact between two regions of different conductivity.

- Potential is continuous across the boundary
- j_n is also continuous.

$$V^1 = V^2, \quad \left(\frac{\partial V}{\partial x} \right)^1 = \left(\frac{\partial V}{\partial x} \right)^2, \quad j_n^1 = j_n^2$$

$$E_t^1 = E_t^2, \quad \sigma_1 E_n^1 = \sigma_2 E_n^2$$

$$\sigma_1 \frac{E_n^1}{E_t^1} = \sigma_2 \frac{E_n^2}{E_t^2}$$

$$\sigma_1 \cot \alpha = \sigma_2 \cot \beta$$

$$\frac{\tan \alpha}{\tan \beta} = \frac{\sigma_1}{\sigma_2}$$

Current line is bent towards to the normal if the resistivity of the second medium ρ_2 is larger than the one of the first medium ρ_1 .

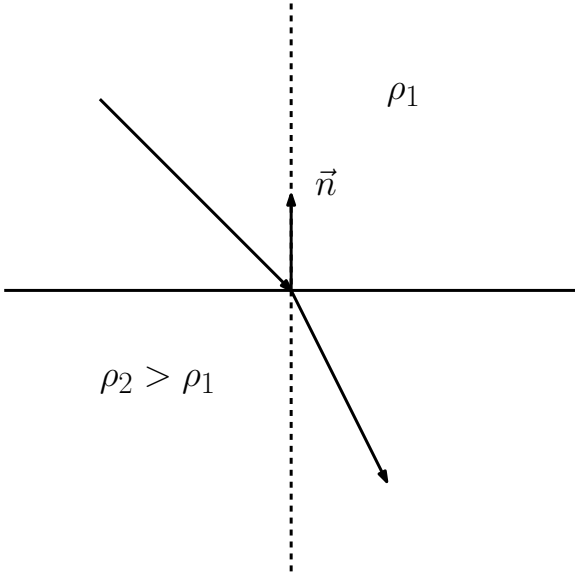


Figure 2.6: Bending towards normal

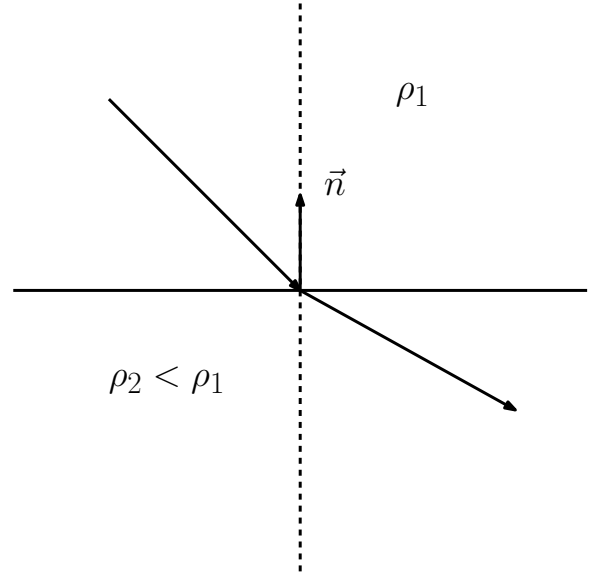


Figure 2.7: Bending away from normal

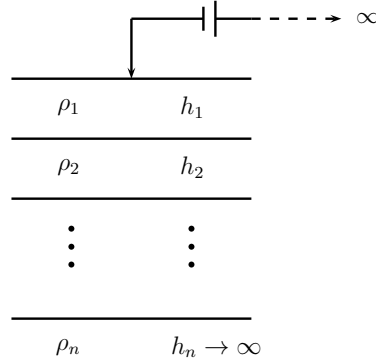


Figure 2.8: Model of n layer structure

2.1.2 Potential distribution at the surface of a horizontally stratified earth (Solution of the Laplace equation (2.6))

Starting with a *model*:

The subsurface consists of finite number of layers with the last layer having infinite layer thickness ($h_n \rightarrow \infty$). We assume that ρ_i is isotropic (no dependence of the direction of measurement). The field is generated by a point source with the current I is a direct current.

Starting from the Laplace equation with potential V :

$$\frac{\partial^2 V}{\partial x^2} + \frac{\partial^2 V}{\partial y^2} + \frac{\partial^2 V}{\partial z^2} = 0 \quad (2.11)$$

In cylindrical coordinates (r, θ, z) :

$$\frac{\partial^2 V}{\partial r^2} + \frac{1}{r} \frac{\partial V}{\partial r} + \frac{\partial^2 V}{\partial z^2} + \frac{1}{r^2} \frac{\partial^2 V}{\partial \theta^2} = 0 \quad (2.12)$$

The solution is symmetrical to the vertical axis, so $\frac{\partial V}{\partial \theta} = \frac{\partial^2 V}{\partial \theta^2} = 0$, so $V(r, \theta, z) = V(r, z)$. So the Laplace equation to be solved reduces to:

$$\frac{\partial^2 V}{\partial r^2} + \frac{1}{r} \frac{\partial V}{\partial r} + \frac{\partial^2 V}{\partial z^2} = 0 \quad (2.13)$$

Solution of (2.13). Ansatz:

$$V(r, z) = U(r)W(z) \quad (2.14)$$

So the solution is the product of a function of r alone and a function of z alone. We substitute (2.14) into (2.13) and multiply all terms with $1/UW$:

$$\underbrace{\frac{1}{UW} \frac{d^2 U}{dr^2} + \frac{1}{UW} \frac{DU}{dr}}_{\text{depends on } r} + \underbrace{\frac{1}{W} \frac{d^2 W}{dz^2}}_{\text{depends on } z} = 0 \quad (2.15)$$

This equation is satisfied, if

$$\frac{1}{U} \frac{d^2 U}{dr^2} + \frac{1}{Ur} \frac{DU}{dr} = -\lambda^2 \quad (2.16)$$

$$\frac{1}{W} \frac{d^2 W}{dz^2} = \lambda^2 \quad (2.17)$$

where λ is a real constant.

Solution of (2.17)

Using the Ansatz:

$$W = Ce^{-\lambda z} \quad , \quad W = Ce^{\lambda z} \quad (2.18)$$

where C and λ are arbitrary constants.

Solution of (2.16)

Using the Ansatz:

$$W = CJ_0(\lambda r) \quad (2.19)$$

with $J_0(\lambda r)$ the *Bessel-function* of order zero.

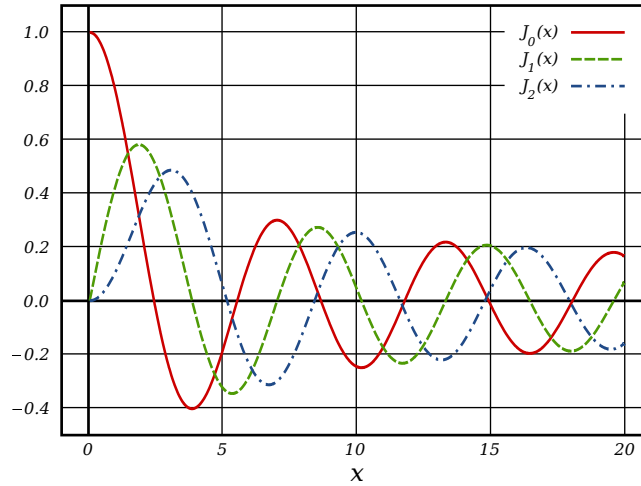


Figure 2.9: Bessel-functions source: https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Besselsche_Differentialgleichung

We combine the two solutions ((2.18) and (2.19)) for the solution of (2.13):

$$V = Ce^{-\lambda z} J_0(\lambda r) \quad , \quad V = Ce^{\lambda z} J_0(\lambda r) \quad (2.20)$$

λ varies from 0 to ∞ and C varies in dependence of λ . Than we write a general solution of the potential (2.13):

$$V = \int_0^\infty \left(\phi(\lambda) e^{-\lambda z} + \psi(\lambda) e^{\lambda z} \right) J_0(\lambda r) d\lambda \quad (2.21)$$

Where $\phi(\lambda)$ and $\psi(\lambda)$ are arbitrary functions of λ .

Potential of homogeneous halfspace

Starting of with the potential in cylindrical coordinates:

$$V = \frac{I\rho}{2\pi\sqrt{r^2 + z^2}} \quad (2.22)$$

Looking at the *Lipschitz-Integral*:

$$\int_0^\infty e^{-\lambda z} J_0(\lambda r) d\lambda = \frac{1}{\sqrt{r^2 + z^2}} \quad (2.23)$$

Now using (2.23) we write (2.22) as:

$$V = \frac{\rho_1 I}{2\pi} \int_0^\infty e^{-\lambda z} J_0(\lambda r) d\lambda \quad (2.24)$$

The general solution (2.21) can now be written:

$$V = \frac{\rho_1 I}{2\pi} \int_0^\infty \left(e^{-\lambda z} + \theta(\lambda) e^{-\lambda z} + X(\lambda) e^{\lambda z} \right) J_0(\lambda r) d\lambda \quad (2.25)$$

Where $\theta(\lambda)$ and $X(\lambda)$ are arbitrary functions of λ , and $\phi(\lambda) = \frac{\rho_1 I}{2\pi} (1 + \theta(\lambda))$ and $\psi(\lambda) = \frac{\rho_1 I}{2\pi} X(\lambda)$. The solutions of the form (2.25) are valid in all layers but $\theta(\lambda)$ and $X(\lambda)$ can be different for each layer i :

$$V_i = \frac{\rho_1 I}{2\pi} \int_0^\infty \left(e^{-\lambda z} + \theta_i(\lambda) e^{-\lambda z} + X_i(\lambda) e^{\lambda z} \right) J_0(\lambda r) d\lambda \quad (2.26)$$

Adaption of the solution to the boundary conditions

Assuming we are at the layer boundaries of $z = h_i$.

A) Potential (2.26) is continious at each boundary plane in the subsurface:

$$V_i(r, h_i) = V_{i+1}(r, h_i) \quad (2.27)$$

This equation can only be satisfied if the integrands on both sides are equal:

$$\theta_i(\lambda) e^{-\lambda h_i} + X_i(\lambda) e^{\lambda h_i} = \theta_{i+1}(\lambda) e^{-\lambda h_i} + X_{i+1}(\lambda) e^{\lambda h_i} \quad (2.28)$$

B) At each boundary plane j_z the boundary condition must be fulfilled that:

$$j_z = -\frac{1}{\rho} \frac{\partial V}{\partial z} \quad (2.29)$$

and so

$$\frac{1}{\rho_i} \left((1 + \theta_i(\lambda)) e^{\lambda h_i} - X_i(\lambda) e^{\lambda h_i} \right) = \frac{1}{\rho_{i+1}} \left((1 + \theta_{i+1}(\lambda)) e^{\lambda h_i} - X_{i+1}(\lambda) e^{\lambda h_i} \right) \quad (2.30)$$

To satisfy this condition we differentiate the expression for the potential in the first layer (2.22) with respect to z and then substitute $z = 0$:

$$\frac{1}{\rho_1} \frac{\partial V_1(r, 0)}{\partial z} = 0 \quad , \text{ for } r \neq 0 \quad (2.31)$$

We thus obtain the equation:

$$\int_0^\infty (-1 - \theta_1(\lambda) + X_1(\lambda)) J_0(\lambda r) d\lambda = 0 \quad (2.32)$$

$$\Rightarrow \theta_1(\lambda) = X_1(\lambda) \quad (2.33)$$

C) Near the current source the potential must approach to infinity

$$V_{\infty} = \frac{\rho I}{2\pi} \frac{1}{\sqrt{r^2 + z^2}}$$

which is approaching asymptotically to the potential for a layer extending to infinite height.

D) $V \rightarrow 0$ if $z \rightarrow \infty \Rightarrow X_n = 0$, because otherwise $e^{\lambda z}$ would drive the potential to an infinite value at an infinite depth.