

SOME EXPERIENCE WITH PERFORMANCE EVALUATION TESTS
FOR THE FOUR REFLECTOR CASSEGRAIN ANTENNA OF RIYADH
4 EARTH STATION, SAUDI ARABIA

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Abstract

G/T of the four reflector Cassegrain antenna of Riyadh 4 earth station is measured using the radio star Cassiopeia 4. The pointing parameters of the radio star are calculated and then used to estimate the azimuth and elevation angles of the earth station in direction of the radio star. The flux density and brightness temperature of Cassiopeia A at any frequency is calculated. Corrections for angular extension of radio star and atmospheric absorption are also calculated. G/T is then related to the above parameters and receiving system noise temperature. The test mainly consists of measuring the received noise power at output of LNR with and without the radio star in the antenna beam and thus G/T can be determined. The significance of the results is discussed and results were found to be in good agreement with INTELSAT technical specifications.

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I. Introduction

A feed system employing a sub-reflector is a Cassegrain system. This technique is not new; having been invented in the 17th century by "William Cassegrain". In recent years, the double reflectors Cassegrain antenna has been employed in a wide variety of radar antennas, microwave antennas and satellite earth station antennas. The latest generation of earth stations concentrated on electronic equipment at the antenna base and the RF connection to the feedhorn is made by a four reflector-focused beam system [1]. This antenna system is capable of transmitting twin orthogonally-polarized signals towards a communication satellite while simultaneously receiving a similar pair of orthogonally polarized signals from satellite. This technique has reduced the axial dimension of the antenna and eliminated the need for long transmission lines since the feed is physically located at the vertex of the parabolic main reflector. In Riyadh 4 earth station, Saudi Arabia, a four focusing reflector and primary horn assemblies make up the beam waveguide assembly which transmits the signal across the motional axes of the antenna without loss. Riyadh 4 earth station is employing a corrugated conical horn with numerous fins inside the wall, this horn behaves as a launcher realizing a rotationally-symmetric pattern across the wide frequency band from 3.7 to 6.5 GHz [2].

The purpose of the present work is to report the results of the performance verification tests which have been carried out on the Cassegrain antenna fed by four reflector beam waveguide in Riyadh 4 earth station. This has a 32 meters Cassegrain antenna for major path-2 Atlantic ocean satellite operation. These tests include the

gain to noise temperature (G/T) measurement using the radio star method, receiving system noise temperature using the Y factor method, antenna receive gain, antenna transmit gain and antenna side-lobe levels (both transmit and receive). This paper deals with G/T measurement using the radio star technique.

II. G/T Measurement With the Aid of Radio Star

A. General

It is not accurate to find the gain of a large aperture antenna by a measurement employing a collimation tower because a significant error might appear due to the terrain reflection [3]. The preferred method is by the radio star measurement and at an elevation angle close to that which would be employed during operation. For radio star measurements, Cassiopeia A, Taurus A and dygmias A are recommended sources as they have reasonably large flux densities and have been well studied in the field of radio astronomy [4]. Cassiopeia radio star is used in the present work.

B. Performance objective

G/T will equal or exceed $40.7 + 20 \log f/4$ dB under clear sky conditions and at elevation angle of 5° over the local horizon where f is the frequency in GHz.

C. Test procedures

Step 1: Calculate the pointing data of the radio star "Cassiopeia A" by using the right ascension α , the declination Δ , the perturbation value for the right ascension P_α , the perturbation value for the declination P_Δ , Greenwich sidereal time θ , the longitude I and

the latitude L of the place where the earth station is located. The hour angle of the radio star H at Greenwich mean time T on the X th day of the Y th month of the year Z (the X th day of the Y th month is the W th day from 1st January) is given by [5],

$$H = \theta + L - \Gamma + 1.002738 T \quad (1)$$

where θ , L , Γ and T are in degrees.

The following data are used,

1. The longitude I and latitude L of Riyadh 4 earth station are $56^\circ 31'$ E and $24^\circ 25'$ N respectively.
2. $\Gamma = 23$ Hrs. 21 min. 11.45 sec.
3. $P_\Gamma = 2.71$ sec.
4. $\Delta = 58^\circ 31.9'$.
5. $P_\Delta = 0.33$ min.
6. The sidereal day is the period of one rotation of earth with respect to a fixed star. It comes to 23 Hrs. 56 min. 4.09 sec.

The data from 1 to 5 apply for January 1st, 1950 [6].

Then the azimuth angle AZ (in degrees) and elevation angle EL (in degrees) of the earth station in the direction of the radio star are given by [5,6],

$$AZ = \tan^{-1} \left(\frac{-\cos\Delta \sin H}{\cos I \sin\Delta - \sin I \cos\Delta \cos H} \right) \quad (2)$$

and

$$EL = \sin^{-1} (\cos I \cos\Delta \cos H + \sin I \sin\Delta) \quad (3)$$

The pointing parameters are converted into degrees as follows,

$$a) \quad \Gamma_{1979} = \Gamma_{1950} + P_{\Gamma} \times (1979 - 1950 + \frac{W}{365})$$

which is written in the form $\Gamma_{\text{Hour}}, \Gamma_{\text{Min}}, \Gamma_{\text{Sec}}$

$$\text{Therefore } \Gamma_{\text{Deg}} = \Gamma_{\text{Hour}} \times \frac{360}{24} + \Gamma_{\text{Min}} \times \frac{360}{24 \times 60} + \Gamma_{\text{Sec}} \times \frac{360}{24 \times 60 \times 60}$$

$$b) \quad \Delta_{1979} = \Delta_{1950} + P_{\Delta} \times (1979 - 1950 + \frac{W}{365})$$

which is written in the form $\Delta_{\text{Hour}}, \Delta_{\text{Min}}, \Delta_{\text{Sec}}$

$$\text{Therefore } \Delta_{\text{Deg}} = \Delta_{\text{Hour}} \times \frac{360}{24} + \Delta_{\text{Min}} \times \frac{360}{24 \times 60} + \Delta_{\text{Sec}} \times \frac{360}{24 \times 60 \times 60}$$

$$c) \quad \theta_{\text{Deg}} = \theta_{\text{Hour}} \times \frac{360}{24} + \theta_{\text{Min}} \times \frac{360}{24 \times 60} + \theta_{\text{Sec}} \times \frac{360}{24 \times 60 \times 60}$$

$$d) \quad T_{\text{Deg}} = T_{\text{Hour}} \times \frac{360}{24} + T_{\text{Min}} \times \frac{360}{24 \times 60} + T_{\text{Sec}} \times \frac{360}{24 \times 60 \times 60}$$

$$e) \quad I_{\text{Deg}} = I_{\text{Deg}} + I_{\text{Min}} \times \frac{1}{60} \times I_{\text{Sec}} + \frac{1}{60 \times 60}$$

$$f) \quad L_{\text{Deg}} = L_{\text{Deg}} + L_{\text{Min}} \times \frac{1}{60} \times L_{\text{Sec}} + \frac{1}{60 \times 60}$$

Step 2: Calculate the flux density ϕ from the radio star "Cassiopeia A" as follows:

The flux density of Cassiopeia A at 4 GHz, $\phi(4)$, in January 1965 is given by [7],

$$\phi(4)_{1965} = 1.061 \times 10^{-23} \quad \text{Wm}^{-2} \text{ Hz}^{-1}$$

and at any arbitrary frequency f (GHz),

$$\phi(f)_{1965} = \phi(4)_{1965} \times \left(\frac{f}{4}\right)^{-0.792}$$

$$= 1.061 \times 10^{-23} \times \left(\frac{f}{4}\right)^{-0.792} \quad (4)$$

Since Cassiopeia A is subject to a frequency reduction of flux with time, a correction factor $Q(\text{dB})$ has to be considered [7],

$$Q = (0.042 - 0.0126 \log f) n \quad \text{dB} \quad (5)$$

where f is the operating frequency in GHz and n is the number of years elapsed with $n = 0$ in 1st of January 1965. At any day W of the year Z , n is given by,

$$n = Z - 1965 + \frac{W}{365} \quad (6)$$

Therefore, from Equations (4-6), the flux density $\phi(f)$ at frequency f on any day W of the year Z is given by,

$$\phi(f) = 10 \log \phi(4)_{1965} - 0.042 - 0.0126 \log f) \left(Z - 1965 + \frac{W}{365}\right) \quad (7)$$

Considering that the test has been conducted on December 20th, 1979 at $f = 3.7, 4$ and 4.2 GHz respectively, then the following flux densities can be readily obtained,

$$\phi(3.7)_{1979} = 1.00078 \times 10^{-23} \text{ Wm}^{-2} \text{ Hz}^{-1}$$

$$\phi(4)_{1979} = 0.94236 \times 10^{-23} \text{ Wm}^{-2} \text{ Hz}^{-1}$$

$$\phi(4.2)_{1979} = 0.90744 \times 10^{-23} \text{ Wm}^{-2} \text{ Hz}^{-1}$$

Step 3: Calculate the correction for the angular extension of the radio star C_s at frequencies 3.7, 4.0 and 4.2 GHz. C_s has been

calculated on the basis that the angular extension of the source in the sky is significant compared with the beamwidth of such antenna and its radiation is generally randomly polarized with an intensity varying over various parts of the star. C_s is directly obtained from the curve given in Fig. (1) when the half-power beamwidth BW is known. This latter quantity is calculated from the following equation,

$$BW = 61 \frac{\lambda}{D} \text{ degrees} \quad (8)$$

where D is the main reflector diameter (D = 32 meters for Riyadh 4 earth station).

The following results can be readily obtained:

$$BW_{3.7} = 0.15456^\circ, \quad BW_{4.0} = 0.14297^\circ, \quad BW_{4.2} = 0.13616^\circ,$$

$$(C_s)_{3.7} = 0.44 \text{ dB}, \quad (C_s)_{4.0} = 0.52 \text{ dB} \text{ and } (C_s)_{4.2} = 0.55 \text{ dB}$$

It is noticed that in Fig. (1), Curve A has been calculated on an averaging assumption while Curve B has been calculated on the basis of latest measurements and is believed to be more accurate [7].

Step 4: Calculate the correction for atmospheric absorption from Fig. (2); the correction for angles of elevation above 5 degrees is given by [7],

$$C_a = \frac{X}{\sin EL} \text{ dB} \quad (9)$$

where X is the one-way absorption for a vertical path in dB (X = 0.036 at 4 GHz), X at other frequencies is obtained from Fig. (3).

Step 5: Calculate the brightness temperature of the radio star T_s by using the following equation [5],

$$T_s = \eta \frac{\phi(f) R^2 \pi}{2 K} \quad ^\circ\text{K} \quad (10)$$

where the flux density of the radio star $\phi(f)$ is calculated from Step 2, R is the antenna radius in meters, K is Boltzmann's constant and η is the aperture efficiency ($\eta = 0.7$ for Riyadh 4 earth station antenna). T_s for 3.7, 4.0 and 4 GHz can be readily calculated to be 204.13, 192.22 and 185.1 $^\circ\text{K}$ respectively.

Step 6: Calculate the suitable initial setting value A_2 of the flap attenuator E_6 (See Fig. (4)) by measuring the ratio of the noise power received when the antenna points exactly in the direction of the radio star and when the antenna is deviated by more than 2° from it. The initial setting value of the flap attenuator is selected as follows: point the antenna at the radio star and set the flap attenuator at the value obtained by [5],

$$A'_2 = 10 \log \frac{T_s + 100}{T_s} \quad \text{dB} \quad (11)$$

where the value 100 is the receiving system noise temperature (the noise temperature at standard A earth stations is practically less than this value). Then the value of A_2 is approximated to A_2 as follows,

$$A_2 = (\text{Integer part of } A'_2) + 1 \quad \text{dB} \quad (12)$$

Table (1) gives A_2 at 3.7, 4.0 and 4.2 GHz. A_2 should be kept constant during each test.

Frequency (GHz)	T_s ($^{\circ}$ K)	A_2 (dB)	A_1 (dB)
3.7	204.13	5.21	6
4.0	192.22	4.66	5
4.2	185.10	4.66	5

Table (1). A_2 at different frequencies.

Step 7: While pointing the antenna exactly to the radio star, record the maximum received noise level $P_n + P_{st}$ where P_n is the noise power corresponding to the system noise temperature T and P_{st} is the additional noise power when the antenna is in exact alignment with the radio star.

Step 8: Deviate the antenna from the radio star in azimuth direction by more than 2° and alter the attenuation A_1 of the RF variable attenuator E_5 (see Fig. (4)) in order to maintain the power level constant. The parameter r will be calculated from the difference between A_2 and A_1 .

D. Calculation of G/T

The antenna gain is given by,

$$G = 4 \pi A_e / \lambda^2 \quad (13)$$

where A_e is the effective antenna aperture area in meter². The relation between $\phi(f)$ and T_s is expressed as follows [5],

$$A_e \phi(f) = 2 K T_s \text{ WHz}^{-1} \quad (14)$$

Therefore, G is obtained by substituting A_e from Equation (14) into Equation (13),

$$G = \frac{8 \pi K T_s}{\lambda^2 \phi(f)} \quad (15)$$

and G/T is thus given by,

$$G/T = \frac{8 \pi K T_s}{\lambda^2 \phi(f) T} \cdot C_a C_s \quad (16)$$

where corrections C_a and C_s have been included.

Defining r to be the numerical ratio of the received noise power when the antenna points exactly in the direction of the radio star and the received noise power when the antenna deviates in the azimuth direction, thus

$$r = \frac{P_{st} + P_n}{P_n} \quad (17)$$

and r in dB is given by,

$$r, \text{ dB} = 10 \log \frac{P_{st} + P_n}{P_n} \quad (18)$$

$$\text{Therefore } \frac{P_{st}}{P_n} = \frac{T_s}{T} = 10^{\frac{r, \text{ dB}}{10}} - 1 \quad (19)$$

and G/T can be readily written as follows,

$$\frac{G}{T}, \text{ dB}/^\circ\text{K} = S, \text{ dB}/^\circ\text{K} + 10 \log \{ 10^{r, \text{ dB}/10} - 1 \}, \text{ dB} + C_a, \text{ dB} \quad (20)$$

where

$$S = \frac{8 \pi K C_s}{\lambda^2 \phi(f)} \quad (21)$$

is the radio star factor and r , dB will be obtained from $A_2 - A_1$.

E. Test set-up block diagram and equipment

Fig. (4) shows the test set up block diagram, E_1 : precision test receiver, E_2 : mixer preamplifier, E_3 : signal generator, E_4 : Frequency meter, E_5 : RF variable attenuator and E_6 : Flap attenuator.

F. Test results

Tables (2-4) give G/T for LNR No. (1) at 3.7, 4 and 4.2 GHz while Tables (5-7) give G/T for LNR No. (2).

III. Discussions and Conclusions

In the present technique, the parameter measured is the ratio r of the received noise power at the output of the low noise receiver (LNR) under test with and without the radio source in the antenna beam. The system noise temperature of a standard A earth station (which is in the range from 50°K to less than 100°K) is dependent on the elevation angle. The results show that angles ranging from 9.4° to 23° give a value of r in the order of 5 dB. The variation of G/T with elevation angle is more significant below 20° than above 20° . Thus in order to demonstrate satisfactorily that an earth station meets specifications, it is necessary to make measurements at several frequencies in the receiving band (3.7 - 4.2 GHz) over a range of elevation angles, preferably covering the operating elevation angle of the earth station $\pm 10^\circ$.

The present test has been conducted using the radio star Cassiopeia A, the advantages of which are,

- i. Cassiopeia A flux density is large enough to be detected.
- ii. At the latitude of Riyadh 4 earth station, Cassiopeia A goes down to the horizon, making it possible to measure G/T at low elevation angles. Data for radio stars prepared by INTELSAT for Riyadh 4 earth station are as follows,

<u>Time (GMT)</u>	<u>Source</u>	<u>Elevation angle</u>
0400 - 1300	Cassiopeia A	5° - 57°
1210 - 1500	Taurus A	5° - 40°
1500 - 1800	Cygnus A	18° - 5°
1800 - 2200	Cassiopeia A	32° - 5°
2300 - 0100	Taurus A	30° - 5°
0150 - 0300	Cygnus A	5° - 15°

The above data shows that Cassiopeia A is the best fit source for Riyadh 4 earth station and the suitable time to conduct the test is from 0400 - 1300 GMT.

- iii. For Taurus A which is elliptically-polarized, it is necessary to use the mean of two readings taken in two orthogonal directions. This is not necessary when using Cassiopeia A or Cygnus A.
- iv. The flux density of Cygnus A may not be reasonably sufficient to carry the test.

Two methods can be employed when measuring G/T with the aid of a radio star: i) a program track unit which accepts a paper tape input containing the position of the radio source as a function of time and

provides output to the antenna to drive it along the path followed by the source, ii) the other method is a receiving unit with facilities to display and measure the power received by the antenna. The latter method is the one used in the present test. The LNR has been connected to the RF variable attenuator E₅ so that observations are made at the chosen carrier frequencies. The mixer preamplifier E₂ is driven by a signal generator E₃ as a local oscillator, thus enabling observations to be made at any required frequency by connecting it into the RF sector of the receiving system. The measurement of r is obtained by altering E₅ to maintain the output level of the noise power constant when the antenna is driven on and off the radio star. This technique has the advantage of minimizing errors resulting from the nonlinearity of the power meter. The use of the flap attenuator E₆ is to provide a constant reference value so that when altering E₅, any increase or decrease in the receive noise power is the accurate result obtained with and without the radio star.

It is concluded that the experimental results obtained in the present work are in agreement with the technical characteristics in the INTELSAT document ICSC-37-38 E W/1/69 which states that G/T should be > 40.7 at 5° elevation angle.

References

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Table (2). Figure of Merit (G/T)

Radio Star : Cassiopeia - A Weather : Fine						
Frequency : 3.700 GHZ LNR No. : 1						
Star Factor "S" : 37.659 dB/°K						
G/T = S, dB/°K + 10 log (10 ^{r, dB/10} - 1), dB + C _a , dB						
Time GMT	AZ. "deg."	EL. "deg."	r "dB"	$10 \log(10^{\frac{r, \text{dB}}{10}} - 1)$	C _a "dB"	G/T "dB"
10:30	28.68	9.41	4.91	3.2169	0.220	41.096
10:32	28.78	9.62	5.00	3.3491	0.215	41.228
11:04	30.89	13.30	5.15	3.5668	0.156	41.381
11:08	31.09	13.70	5.16	3.5812	0.152	41.392
11:38	32.58	17.30	5.29	3.7670	0.121	41.547
11:41	32.73	17.70	5.31	3.7953	0.117	41.571
11:43	32.80	17.90	5.32	3.8095	0.117	41.585
12:12	33.86	21.60	5.40	3.9223	0.098	41.679
12:16	33.94	22.10	5.42	3.9504	0.096	41.705
12:18	33.99	22.30	5.38	3.9842	0.095	41.648

Table (3). Figure of Merit (G/T)

Radio Star : Cassiopeia - A Weather : Fine Frequency : 4.000 GHz LNR No. : 1 Star Factor "S" : 38.678 dB/°K $G/T = S, \text{ dB/°K} + 10 \log (10^{r, \text{dB}/10} - 1), \text{ dB} + C_a, \text{ dB}$						
Time GMT	AZ. "deg."	EL. "deg."	r "dB"	$10 \log(10^{\frac{\text{dB}}{r, 10}} - 1)$	C_a "dB"	G/T "dB"
10:34	28.92	9.82	4.94	3.261	0.211	42.150
10:37	28.18	10.20	4.99	3.334	0.203	42.215
11:10	31.17	13.90	5.19	3.624	0.150	42.452
11:13	31.36	14.30	5.20	3.639	0.146	42.463
11:45	32.90	18.20	5.24	3.696	0.115	42.489
11:47	32.95	18.40	5.27	3.739	0.114	42.531
11:48	33.03	18.60	5.24	3.696	0.113	42.487
12:19	34.04	22.50	5.33	3.824	0.094	42.546
12:21	34.08	22.70	5.38	3.894	0.093	42.665
12:12	34.11	22.90	5.35	3.852	0.093	42.623

Table (4). Figure of Merit (G/T)

Radio Star : Cassiopeia - A Weather : Fine Frequency : 4.200 GHZ LNR No. : 1 Star Factor "S" : 39.296 dB/°K $G/T = S, \text{ dB/}^\circ\text{K} + 10 \log (10^{r, \text{dB}/10} - 1), \text{ dB} + C_a, \text{ dB}$						
Time GMT	AZ. "deg."	EL. "deg."	r "dB"	$r, \frac{\text{dB}}{10}$ $10 \log(10^{-1})$	C_a "dB"	G/T "dB"
10:37	29.29	10.40	4.63	2.7970	0.199	42.292
10:43	29.53	10.80	4.63	2.7970	0.192	42.285
11:14	31.44	14.50	4.71	2.9180	0.144	42.358
11:16	31.54	14.70	4.79	3.0380	0.142	42.476
11:18	31.64	14.90	4.77	3.0080	0.140	42.444
11:51	33.15	19.00	4.92	3.2320	0.111	42.639
11:55	33.27	19.40	4.92	3.2320	0.108	42.636
12:24	34.16	23.10	4.97	3.3052	0.092	42.693
12:25	34.19	23.30	4.98	3.3198	0.091	42.707
12:27	34.22	23.50	4.98	3.3198	0.090	42.706

Table (5). Figure of Merit (G/T)

Radio Star : Cassiopeia - A Weather : Fine						
Frequency : 3.700 GHZ LNR No. : 2						
Star Factor "S" : 37.659 dB/°K						
G/T = S, dB/°K + 10 log (10 ^{r, dB/10} - 1), dB + C _a , dB						
Time GMT	AZ. "deg."	EL. "deg."	r "dB"	$10 \log(10^{\frac{r, \text{dB}}{10}} - 1)$	C _a "dB"	G/T "dB"
10:45	29.71	11.11	4.51	2.612	0.187	40.458
10:49	29.93	11.50	4.57	2.705	0.181	40.545
11:20	31.76	15.20	4.63	2.797	0.137	40.593
11:22	31.85	15.40	4.63	2.797	0.136	40.592
11:24	31.93	15.60	4.65	2.827	0.134	40.620
11:58	33.39	19.80	4.76	2.993	0.106	40.758
12:01	33.49	20.20	4.75	2.9780	0.104	40.741
12:30	34.29	23.90	4.82	3.083	0.0889	40.830
12:32	34.32	24.10	4.82	3.083	0.0882	40.830
12:33	34.36	24.30	4.82	3.083	0.0875	40.830

Table (6). Figure of Merit (G/T)

Radio Star		: Cassiopeia - A		Weather		: Fine
Frequency		: 4.000 GHZ		LNR No.		: 2
Star Factor "S"		: 38.678 dB/°K				
G/T = S, dB/°K + 10 log (10 ^{r, dB/10} - 1), dB + C _a , dB						
Time GMT	AZ. "deg."	EL. "deg."	r "dB"	$r, \frac{\text{dB}}{10}$ 10 log(10 ⁻¹)	C _a "dB"	G/T "dB"
10:53	30.20	12.00	4.64	2.812	0.173	41.663
10:55	30.33	12.20	4.67	2.858	0.170	41.706
10:57	30.43	12.40	4.64	2.812	0.168	41.658
11:25	32.01	15.80	4.73	2.948	0.132	41.758
11:27	32.10	16.00	4.80	3.053	0.131	41.862
11:29	32.17	16.20	4.77	3.008	0.129	41.815
12:03	33.54	20.40	4.87	3.158	0.103	41.939
12:04	33.61	20.60	4.90	3.202	0.102	41.982
12:35	34.38	24.50	4.92	3.232	0.087	41.997
12:38	34.43	24.90	4.93	3.245	0.086	42.009

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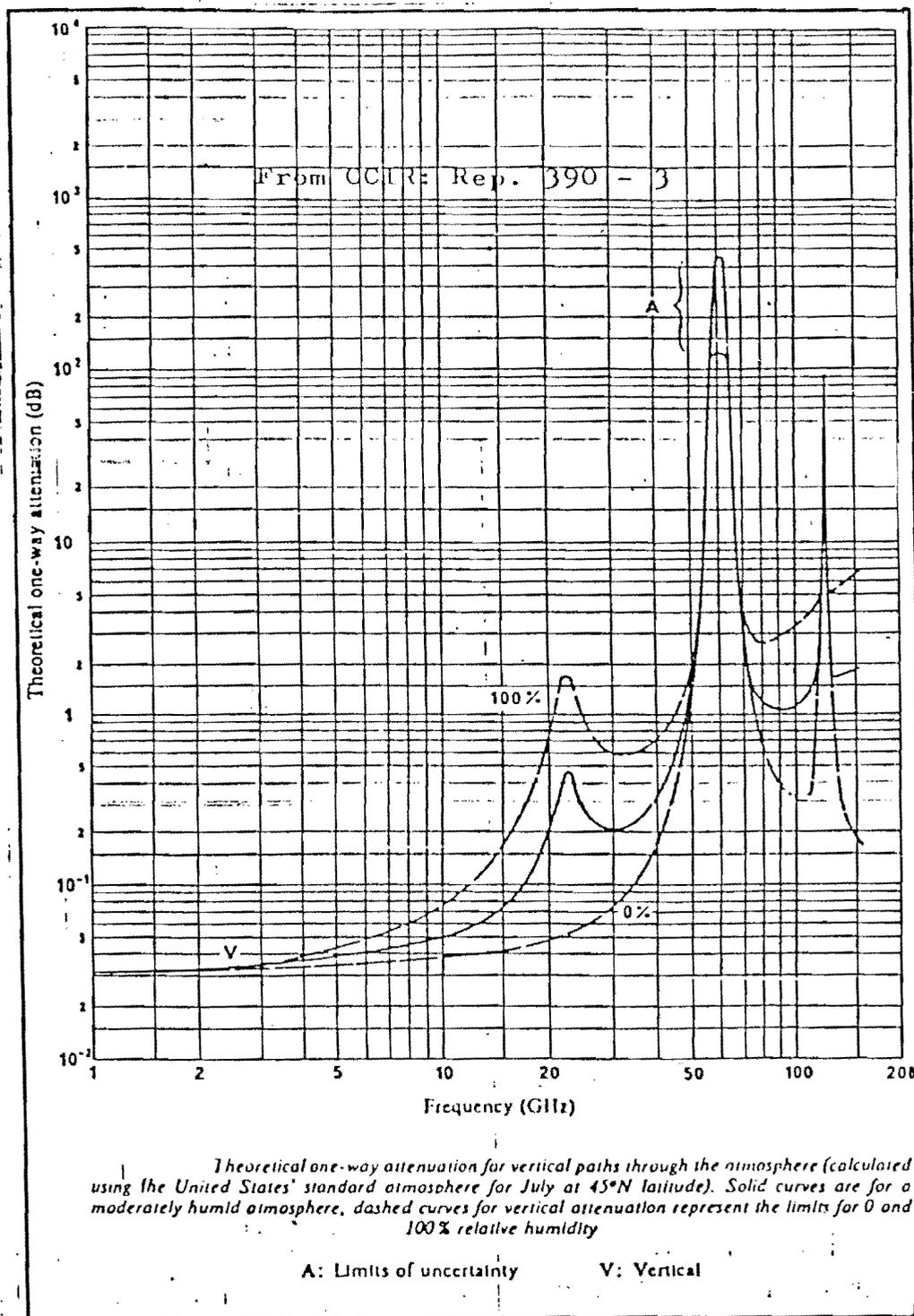


Fig.(3) Correction for atmospheric absorption at any frequency (1 - 200 GHz).

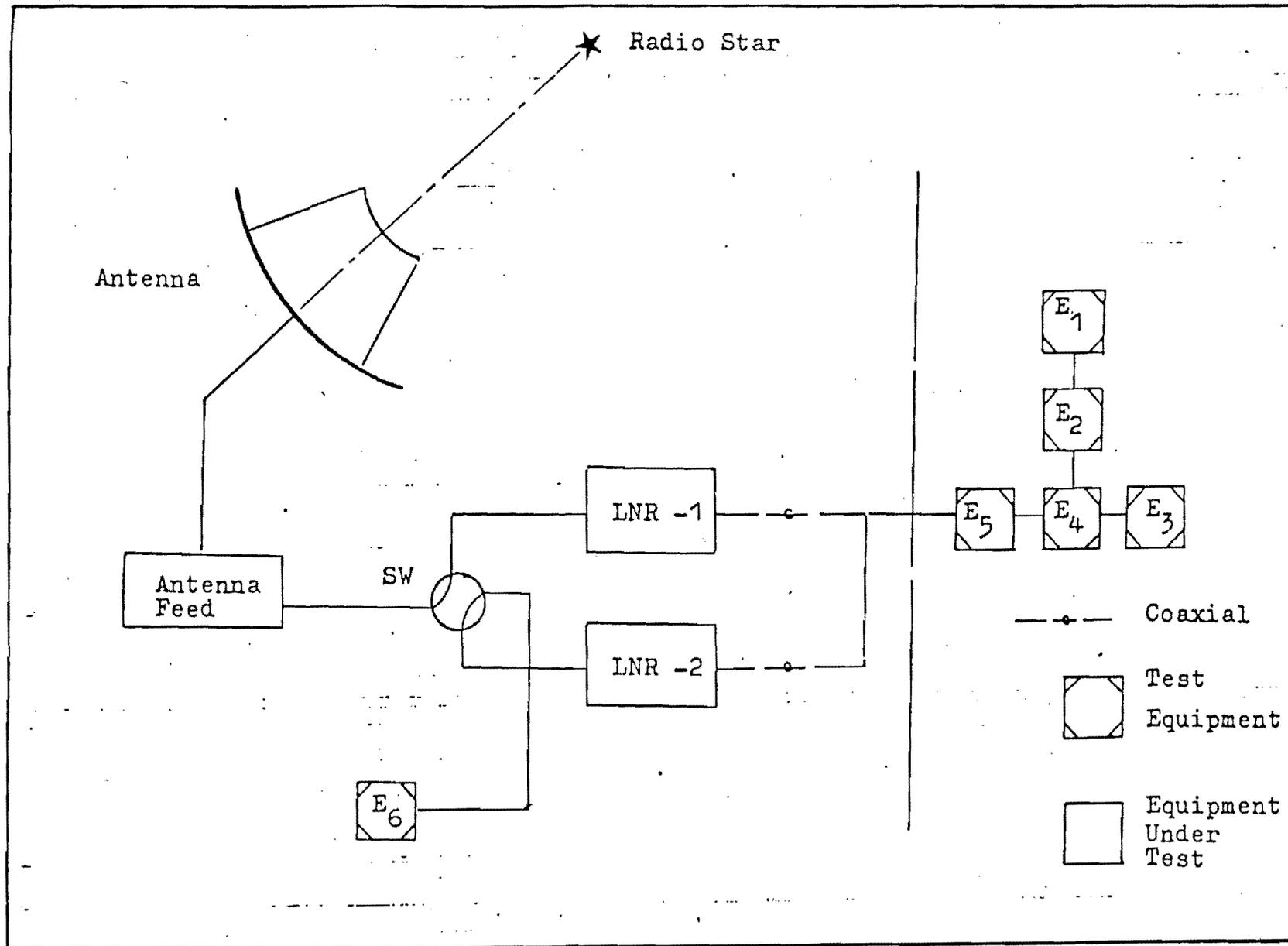


Fig. (4) Test set-up block diagram for G/T measurement