

Supplementary Information

Retention and mobility of phosphogypsum constituents in carbonate aquifer rock materials

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S1. Modified Sequential Extraction Procedure

The sequential extraction procedure was adapted from Scheplitz et al. (2021) to accommodate the high carbonate content of the Zafit aquifer rock. The reagent-to-sample ratios were increased to ensure complete dissolution of the carbonate phase. The extraction was performed on bulk rock samples (before the experiment) and column inlet samples (after the experiment). The five extracted phases are:

1. **Adsorbed/exchangeable:** MgCl₂ (1M, pH 7).
2. **Carbonates:** NaOAc (1M) adjusted to pH 5.
3. **Hydrous iron oxides:** NH₂OH·HCl (0.04 M) in 25% (v/v) HOAc.
4. **Crystalline iron oxides:** NH₂OH·HCl (0.25 M) in HCl (0.25 M).
5. **Sulfides/organic material:** KClO₃ and HCl.

S2. Supplementary Tables

Table S1. The concentration of representative elements in the experimental PGL solution

Element	Concentration mg/L	Element	Concentration µg/L	Element	Concentration µg/L
Na	649	Ge	12	La	8.04
K	93	Al	530	Ce	1.10
Mg	163	Rb	140	Pr	4.90
Ca	817	Tl	3.5	Nd	3.52
Cl	629	Cd	300	Sm	2.81
Br	8.7	Cu	130	Gd	1.59
SO ₄ (S)	267 (89)	U	210	Tb	2.95
PO ₄ (P)	7535 (2405)	Cs	8	Dy	1.78
F	1797	Mo	12	Ho	2.0
Mn	1.2	Cr	72	Er	1.41
Zn	2.6	B	910	Tm	1.19
Ni	1.25	Ba	35	Yb	0.69
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Table S2. Bulk composition of the aquifer rock of the Zafit formation (mg element/kg rock)

Element	Concentration	Element	Concentration	Element	Concentration
Na	1,589±346	Ge	0.184±0.02	La	2.50±0.1
K	760.03±23	Al	1971±83	Ce	5.15±0.3
Mg	553,256±56	Rb	3.84±0.1	Pr	0.62±0.02
Ca	221,777±91	Tl	0.03±0.005	Nd	2.570±0.4
Ti	88±7	Cd	0.99±0.03	Sm	0.75±0.08
V	79±0.2	Cu	14.8±2	Gd	0.48±0.06
Sc	0.38±0.06	U	8.9±2	Tb	0.05±0.01
P	172±8	Cs	0.41±0.05	Dy	0.52±0.05
Sr	668±41	Mo	1.07±0.2	Ho	0.084±0.01
Fe	9,537±327	Cr	9.2±1	Er	0.33±0.06
Mn	1207±32	B	21.5±3	Tm	0.07±0.004
Zn	58.5±3	Ba	140±9	Yb	0.12±0.02
Ni	24.2±1	Co	6.6±1	Lu	0.09±0.005

Table S3. Detailed experimental conditions of batch and column experiments

Parameter	Batch Experiments	Column Experiments
Rock material	Zafit dolomite	Zafit dolomite
Grain size	2-5 mm	1-2 mm, 2-5 mm, 5-10 mm (separate)
Rock mass	10 g	~65-80 g (packed column)
Solution volume	0.5 L (50:1 L:g ratio)	~65-78 mL pore volume
Solution type	3× diluted PGL, pH 3	3× diluted PGL, pH 3
Temperature	Room temperature (~23°C)	Room temperature (~23°C)
Duration	52 days	60 h PGL flow + 12 h DDW rinse
Flow rate	Rotating table mixing	0.60±0.02 mL/min (upward)
Flow geometry	Static batch mixing	Vertical (bottom-up)
Saturation pre-treatment	N/A	24 h DDW, 0.1±0.01 mL/min
Replicates	2	2 per grain size (n=6 total)
Sampling frequency	Hourly → daily	Continuous effluent collection

Table S4. Saturation indexes of PGL-related elements in pH 3-5 calculated using Visual MINTEQ 3.1

Mineral	pH 3	pH 4	pH 5	Mineral	pH 3	pH 4	pH 5	Mineral	pH 3	pH 4	pH 5	Mineral	pH 3	pH 4	pH 5
(UO ₂) ₃ (PO ₄) ₂ (s)	-15.95	-15.489	-12.547	Ca ₃ (PO ₄) ₂ (am1)	-8.875	-5.937	-2.025	Cerarygrite	-0.862	-0.862	-0.862	Cuprite	-7.061	-5.083	-3.093
(VO) ₃ (PO ₄) ₂ (s)	-28.066	-27.288	-24.292	Ca ₃ (PO ₄) ₂ (am2)	-7.125	-3.187	0.725	Chloropyromorphite(c)	0.186	5.176	10.645	Dy(OH) ₃ (s)	-18.445	-15.758	-12.843
Ag ₂ MoO ₄ (s)	-14.533	-13.21	-12.932	Ca ₃ (PO ₄) ₂ (beta)	-6.455	-2.517	1.395	Chloropyromorphite(soil)	-3.844	1.146	6.815	DyF ₃ (s)	2.83	3.533	3.74
Ag ₂ Se(s)	-25.005	-23.025	-21.033	Ca ₄ H ₂ (PO ₄) ₃ ·3H ₂ O(s)	-6.785	-1.858	3.022	Claudetite	-7.465	-7.443	-7.433	DyPO ₄ (s)	0.285	2.015	3.932
Ag ₂ SO ₄ (s)	8.862	8.87	8.874	CaHPO ₄ (s)	-0.049	0.944	1.914	Clausthalite	-2.73	-2.93	-3.026	Epsomite	-3.371	-3.576	-3.687
Ag ₂ SO ₄ (s)	-16.275	-16.237	-16.222	CaHPO ₄ ·2H ₂ O(s)	-0.353	0.637	1.606	Co(B ₂ O ₃) ₂ (s)	-47.493	-42.371	-35.563	Er(OH) ₃ (s)	-17.924	-15.237	-12.323
Ag ₃ AsO ₃ (s)	-25.206	-22.225	-19.233	CaMoO ₄ (s)	-2.442	-1.147	-0.892	Co(OH) ₂ (am)	-13.393	-11.582	-9.825	ErF ₃ (s)	3.061	3.763	3.921
Ag ₃ PO ₄ (s)	-23.635	-21.623	-19.634	Cd(B ₂ O ₃) ₂ (s)	-30.107	-24.939	-18.309	Co(OH) ₂ (c)	-12.589	-10.778	-9.021	ErPO ₄ (s)	0.005	1.736	3.653
AgF·4H ₂ O(s)	-11.454	-11.131	-11.04	Cd(OH) ₂ (s)	-13.787	-11.93	-10.361	Co ₃ (PO ₄) ₂ (s)	-11.329	-7.81	-4.533	Fluorite	5.479	6.106	6.27
Angleite	-3.296	-3.467	-3.552	Cd ₃ (OH) ₄ SO ₄ (s)	-31.642	-28.011	-25.281	CoCl ₂ (s)	-17.347	-17.516	-17.749	Ga(OH) ₃ (am)	-10.21	-8.207	-5.495
Anhydrite	-1.043	-1.033	-1.041	Cd ₃ (PO ₄) ₂ (s)	-12.951	-9.292	-6.58	CoCl ₂ ·6H ₂ O(s)	-11.689	-11.865	-12.102	GaOOH(s)	-8.098	-6.094	-3.381
Arsenolite	-7.425	-7.403	-7.393	Cd ₃ OH ₂ (SO ₄) ₂ (s)	-24.443	-22.753	-22	CoF ₂ (s)	-6.972	-6.484	-6.531	GaPO ₄ (s)	-4.94	-3.894	-2.179
Autunite	-11.431	-9.811	-6.546	Cd ₄ (OH) ₆ SO ₄ (s)	-37.625	-32.137	-27.839	CoHPO ₄ (s)	-3.81	-2.958	-2.198	Gd(OH) ₃ (s)	-18.672	-16.334	-13.744
Avicennite	-17.437	-11.475	-5.499	CdBr ₂ ·4H ₂ O(s)	-10.955	-11.086	-11.512	CoMoO ₄ (s)	-6.178	-5.023	-4.979	GdF ₃ x H ₂ O (s)	0.907	1.26	1.143
Ba(OH) ₂ ·8H ₂ O(s)	-14.54	-22.566	-20.66	CdCl ₂ (s)	-8.266	-8.388	-8.809	CoO(s)	-13.873	-12.061	-10.303	GdF ₃ (s)	2.103	2.457	2.34
BaF ₂ (s)	-2.499	-1.837	-1.731	CdCl ₂ ·1H ₂ O(s)	-7.244	-7.367	-7.789	CoSe(s)	-11.494	-11.654	-11.883	GdPO ₄ x H ₂ O(s)	-1.854	-0.474	1.118
BaHPO ₄ (s)	-2.847	-1.82	-0.907	CdCl ₂ ·2.5H ₂ O(s)	-7.042	-7.167	-7.59	CoSO ₄ (s)	-11.753	-11.883	-12.102	GdPO ₄ (s)	-0.542	0.84	2.432
BaMoO ₄ (s)	-6.73	-5.4	-5.203	CdF ₂ (s)	-7.201	-6.667	-6.902	CoSO ₄ ·6H ₂ O(s)	-6.55	-6.688	-6.911	Goslarite	-4.982	-5.124	-5.461
Barite	1.279	1.323	1.257	CdMoO ₄ (s)	0.366	1.568	1.423	Cotunnite	-6.436	-6.645	-6.744	Gypsum	-0.817	-0.81	-0.82
Be(OH) ₂ (alpha)	-15.951	-15.261	-13.635	CdOHC(s)	-8.071	-7.204	-6.63	Cr(OH) ₃ (am)	-12.456	-10.449	-7.735	H ₂ MoO ₄ (s)	-0.788	-1.446	-3.161
Be(OH) ₂ (am)	-16.561	-15.561	-13.935	CdSe(s)	-7.339	-7.452	-7.87	Cr ₂ O ₃ (c)	-24.535	-20.518	-15.088	H ₂ WO ₄ (s)	-1.495	-1.809	-3.458
Be(OH) ₂ (beta)	-15.551	-14.861	-13.235	CdSO ₄ (s)	-8.623	-8.706	-9.114	CrBr ₃ (s)	-52.636	-53.605	-53.879	Halite	-4.499	-4.514	-4.524
BeMoO ₄ (s)	-20.915	-20.881	-20.968	CdSO ₄ ·1H ₂ O(s)	-7.081	-7.166	-7.574	CrCl ₃ (s)	-41.233	-42.194	-42.466	H-Autunite	-10.7	-11.033	-9.738
Bianchite	-5.216	-5.356	-5.693	CdSO ₄ ·2.67H ₂ O(s)	-6.954	-7.041	-7.451	CrF ₃ (s)	-14.014	-13.991	-13.984	HO ₂ (s)	-0.623	2.436	3.377
BiOBr(s)	1.941	2.738	2.72	Ce(OH) ₃ (s)	-21.987	-19.243	-16.326	Cr ₂ S ₃ (alpha)	9.926	9.932	9.935	Ho(OH) ₃ (s)	-18.022	-15.335	-12.421
BiOO(s)	4.494	5.293	5.276	CeF ₃ (s)	4.598	5.358	5.568	Cu ₂ SO ₄ (s)	-15.18	-15.145	-15.132	HoF ₃ (s)	2.353	3.056	3.263
Bromyrite	-0.516	-0.518	-0.518	Celestite	-1.083	-1.061	-1.076	CuBr(s)	-2.533	-2.537	-2.538	HoPO ₄ (s)	0.208	1.938	3.855
Brucite	-13.861	-12.116	-10.246	CePO ₄ (s)	1.642	3.43	5.35	CuF(s)	-3.469	-3.142	-3.049	Hydroxapatite	-7.105	-0.223	6.629

Table S5. Saturation indexes of PGL-related elements in pH 3-5 calculated using Visual MINTEQ 3.1

pH	Mo Total Aqueous (%)	Mo as MoO ₄ ²⁻ (%)	Ge Total Aqueous (%)	Ge as H ₃ GeO ₃ ⁰ (%)	Ge as H ₂ GeO ₃ ⁻ (%)	SI Mo Precipitation	SI Ge Precipitation
3.0	98.5	97.2	98.8	85.2	12.1	-2.1	-3.2
4.0	99.2	98.8	99.1	78.4	18.9	-1.8	-3.0
5.0	99.5	99.3	98.9	65.3	31.2	-1.6	-2.8
5.7	99.7	99.6	98.5	58.1	38.4	-1.4	-2.6

Table S6. Visual MINTEQ Model Inputs and Parameters

Parameter Category	Input Value/Setting	Experimental Match
Software Version	Visual MINTEQ 3.1	-
Temperature	25°C	Matches room temperature experiments (~23°C)
Solution Composition	Measured PGL (3× diluted): Na ⁺ : 649 mg/L Ca ²⁺ : 817 mg/L Cl ⁻ : 629 mg/L P: 2405 mg/L F ⁻ : 1797 mg/L 39 trace elements	Direct from ICP-MS analysis (Table S1)
Ionic Strength	0.08–0.15 M (Davies equation)	Calculated from measured ion concentrations during batch/column experiments
pH Range	3.0–5.7	Initial pH 3.0 → final batch pH 5.7 (Fig. 1P); column pH 3.0→4.5
Thermodynamic Database	MINTEQ3.1 (default)	Default complexation constants for all aqueous species
Allowed Solid Phases	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Carbonates: dolomite (CaMg(CO₃)₂), calcite (CaCO₃) - Phosphates: hydroxyapatite (Ca₁₀(PO₄)₆(OH)₂), CaHPO₄ - Fluorides: CaF₂ (fluorite), MgF₂ - REE minerals: REPO₄, REF₃ - Hydroxides: Al(OH)₃, Cr(OH)₃, Cu(OH)₂, Zn(OH)₂, Cd(OH)₂, Ni(OH)₂ 	Matches Zafit rock minerals (Fig. S1), secondary precipitates (Figs. S3,S6), post-column rock (Fig. S8)
Major Ligands	PO ₄ ³⁻ /HPO ₄ ²⁻ /H ₂ PO ₄ ⁻ , F ⁻ /HF, SO ₄ ²⁻ /HSO ₄ ⁻ , Cl ⁻ , CO ₃ ²⁻ /HCO ₃ ⁻	Dominant anions in measured PGL (Table S1)
Organic Matter	Excluded	PGL is mineral leachate (no NOM detected)
Model Assumptions	Thermodynamic equilibrium (no kinetics)	Validated for 52-day batch timescale; SI > 0 predicts observed precipitation

S3. Supplementary Figures

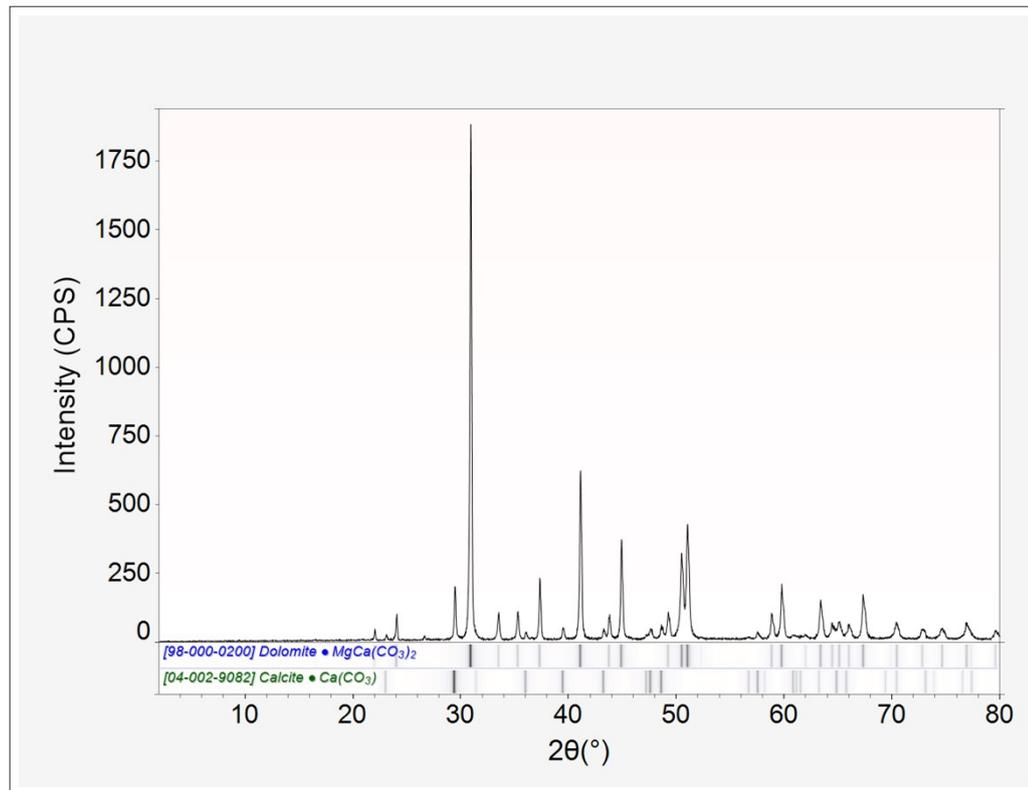


Figure S1. XRD of the Zafit rock sample and its fit to dolomite and calcite standards.

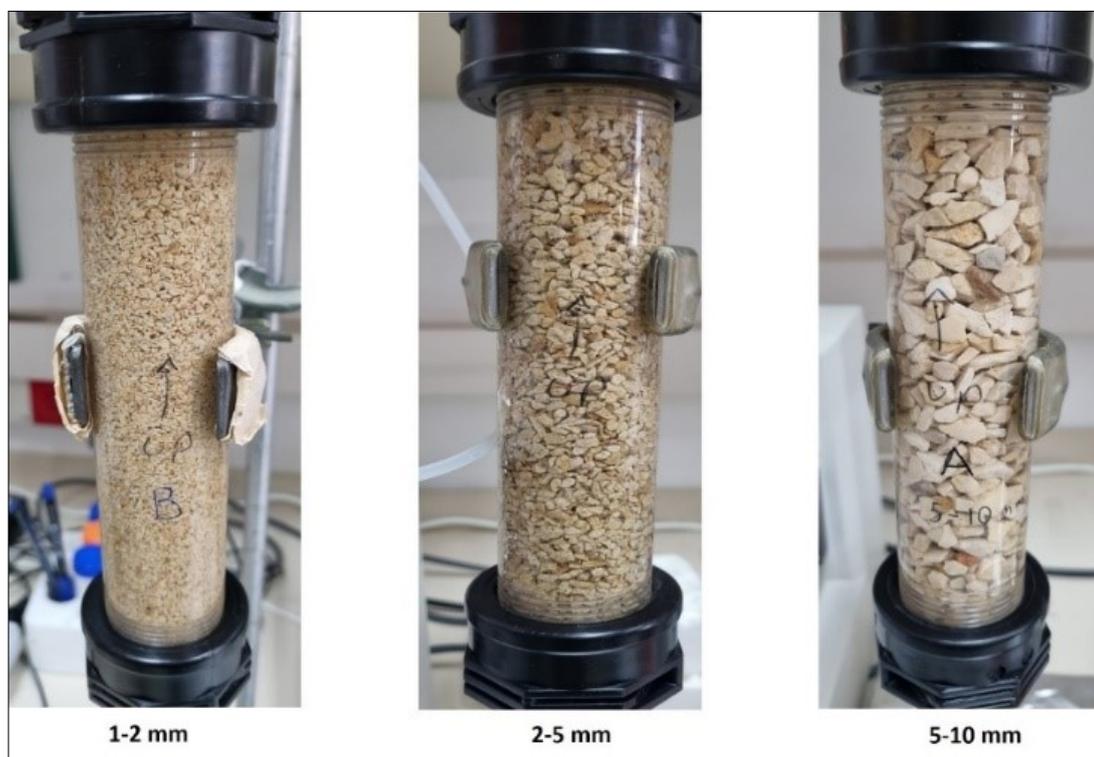


Figure S2. Columns packed with dolomite aquifer rock in three different grain sizes.

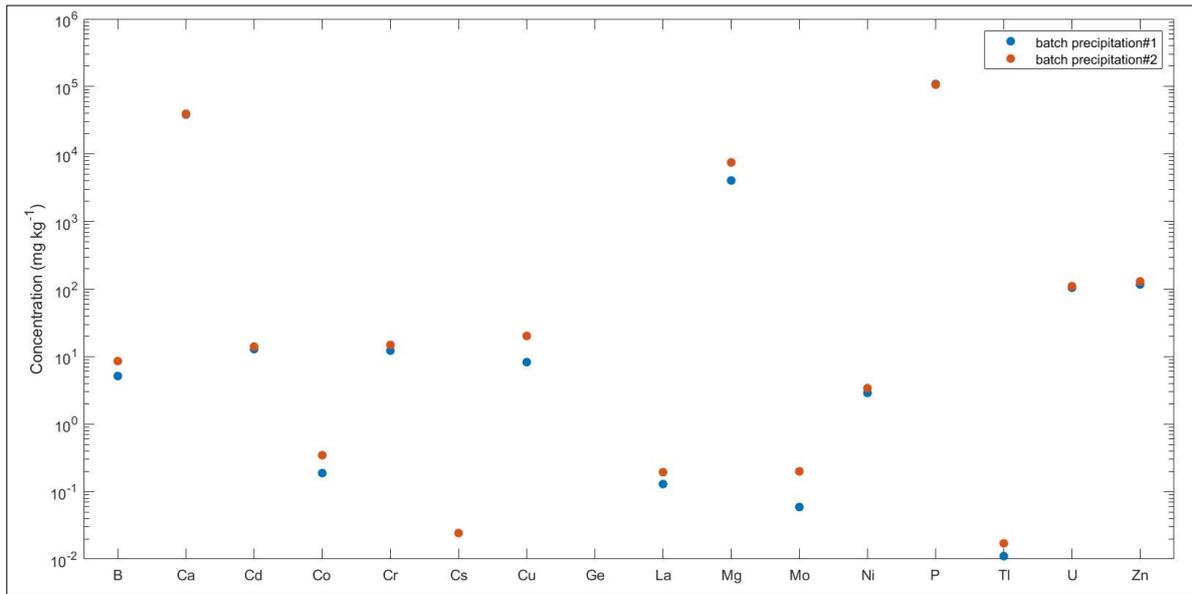


Figure S3. Concentrations of elements in the dissolved fraction of the newly precipitated minerals in the batch experiment. Colors represent replicates extracted from the batch experiment solution.

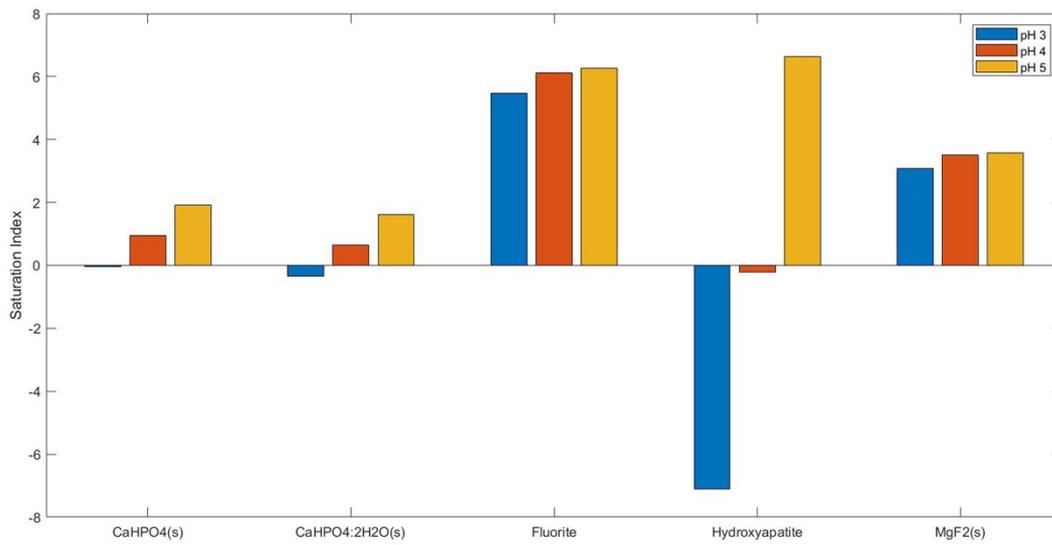


Figure S4. Saturation indexes of Ca and Mg minerals in solution in pH 3-5. Calculated using Visual MINTEQ 3.1.

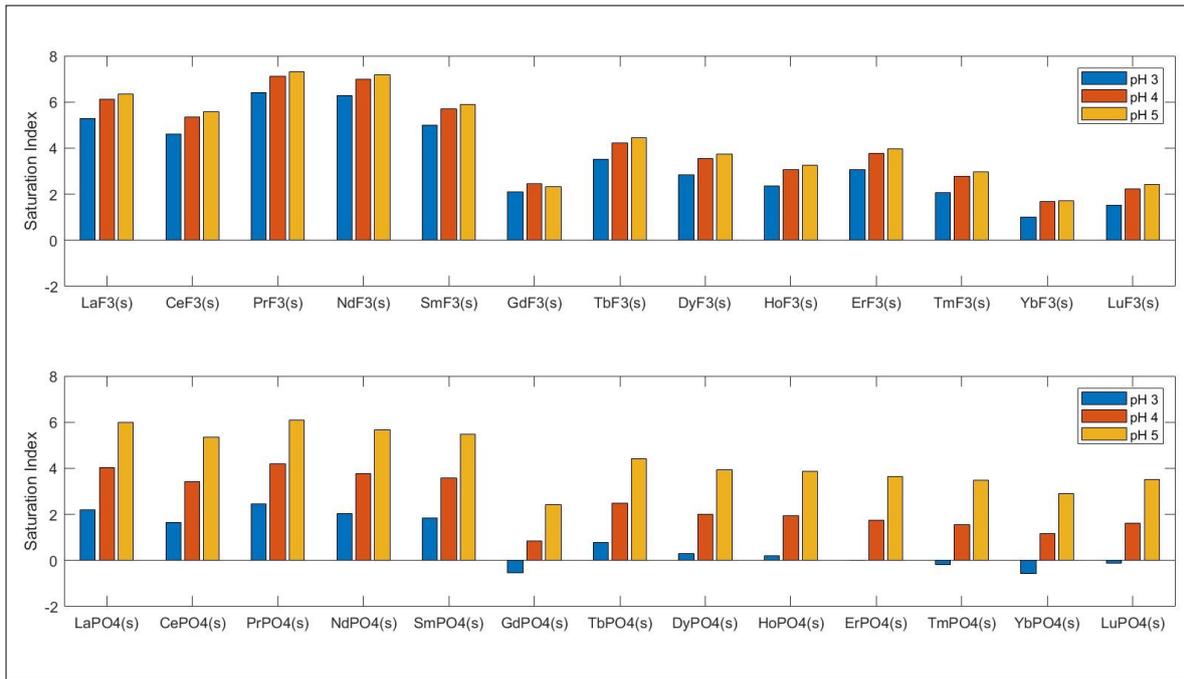


Figure S5. Saturation indexes of REE-F3 minerals (upper panel) and REE-PO4 (lower panel), calculated using Visual MINTEQ 3.1.

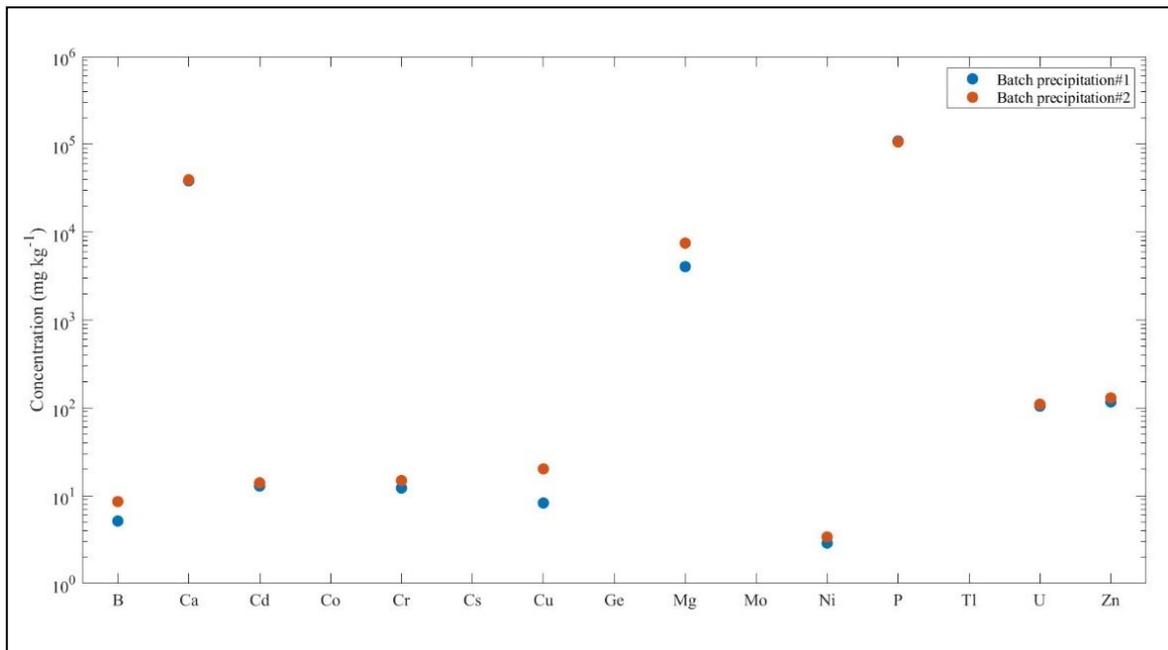


Figure S6. Concentrations of elements in the dissolved fraction of the newly precipitated minerals in the batch experiment. The different colors represent the two replicates extracted from the batch experiment solution.

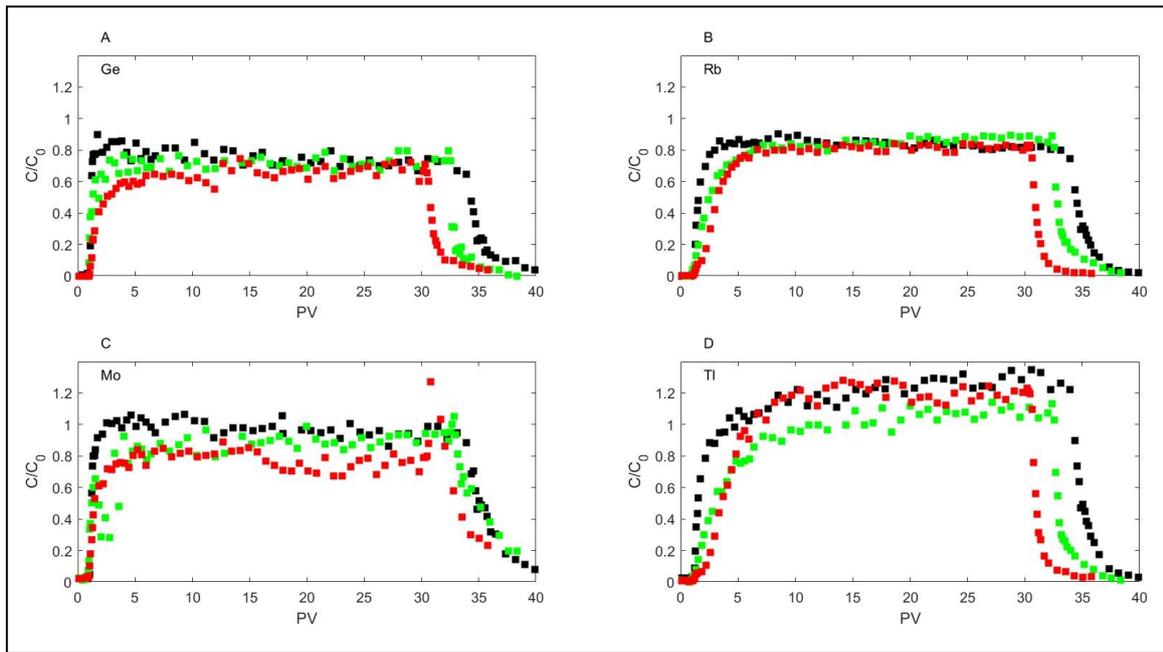


Figure S7. BTC of elements with little interaction with the rock. Black symbols: 5-10 mm grain. Green symbols: 2-5 mm grains. Red symbols: 1-2 mm grain. These elements of BTCs and recoveries were similar through the different grain-size column experiments.

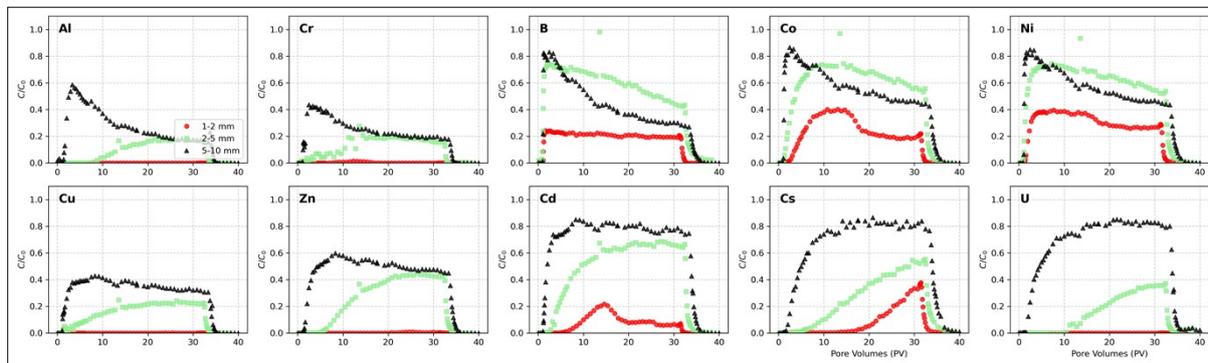


Figure S8. Replicate of Panels in Figure 3 F-O

S4. Calculation of Solid Retention Efficiency

Retention efficiency (η) was calculated directly from aqua regia digestions of inlet rock slices (0–2 cm, ~13 g dry mass) versus initial bulk rock, extrapolated to total column dry rock mass (188 g):

$$\eta(\%) = 100 \times \frac{(C_{initial} - C_{post}) \times m_{total}}{C_{inlet} \times V_{inlet}}$$

where:

- $(C_{initial} - C_{post})$: post-experiment/initial rock concentration ($\mu\text{g/g}$).
- $m_{total} = 188$ g (full column).
- C_{inlet} : PGL input concentration ($\mu\text{g/L}$, Table S1).
- $V_{inlet} = 2160$ mL (60 h \times 0.6 mL/min PGL phase).

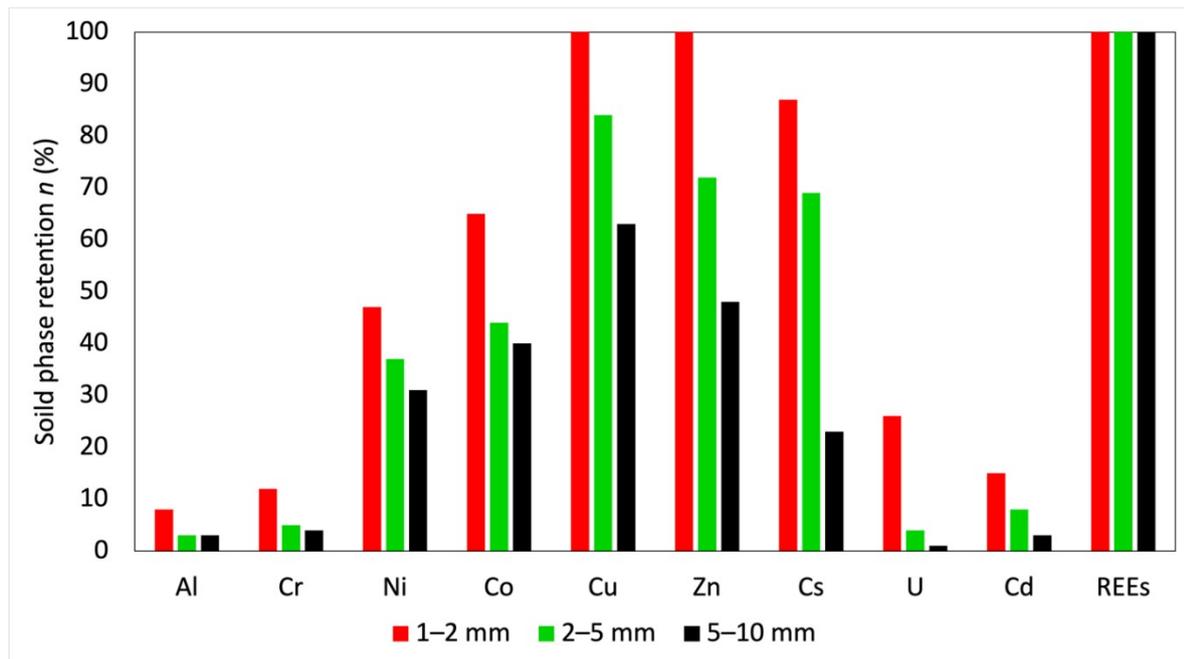


Figure S9. Solid phase retention of representative elements. Retention increases with decreased grain size.

S5. Elemental Concentration prior to and after the PPG column experiment

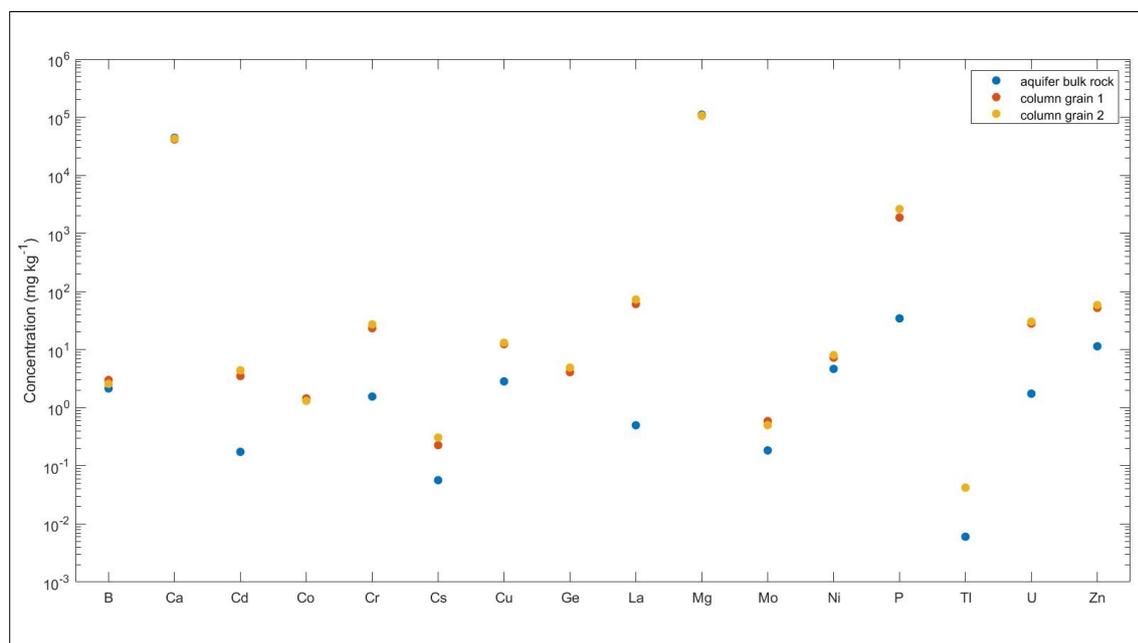


Figure S10. The concentration of different elements on the aquifer rock grain was obtained from the column inlet prior to (blue dots) and after (red and yellow dots) the PPG column experiment.

Figure S10 indicates that the initial carbonate aquifer rock (blue) contains lower solid-phase concentrations than the post-PPG reacted material for all reported elements, including Cd, Cr, Cs, Cu, La, Mo, Ni, P, U, Zn, and Tl. No element shows an opposite trend. While the y -axis is logarithmic, the key observation remains robust: reaction with the experimental solution yields a reacted solid systematically enriched relative to the starting rock. Tl displays the smallest enrichment on an absolute scale (mg kg^{-1}), implying that Tl is least effectively transferred from solution back to the solid during reaction.

A coherent mechanistic explanation involves two coupled processes: selective dissolution of carbonate minerals and element-specific repartitioning during fluid–rock interaction. Acidic influent promotes carbonate dissolution through proton consumption, buffering the fluid and increasing alkalinity. This buffering changes metal speciation and shifts the balance between dissolved and solid-associated forms. Many metals partition strongly to carbonate-bearing media as pH rises, via surface complexation on carbonate and accessory phases, adsorption onto newly generated surfaces, and coprecipitation with secondary carbonates or Fe/Mn oxyhydroxides if such phases are present or form during reaction. These pathways enrich the residual solid in trace elements, even as dissolution removes a fraction of the carbonate matrix.

Tl often behaves differently because it can remain relatively soluble across a broad pH range and may exhibit weaker affinity for carbonate surfaces compared with transition metals and some oxyanion-forming elements. Under these conditions, Tl uptake into the solid is limited, producing only modest solid-phase enrichment relative to the pronounced enrichments observed for the other elements.

The implication for Tl sourcing is straightforward. Because the influent solution was Tl-free, the Tl observed in the breakthrough curve must originate from the solid. The low Tl enrichment of the reacted solid further suggests limited recapture during buffering, consistent with Tl being released during carbonate dissolution and transported predominantly in the dissolved phase. Taken together, these observations support carbonate rock dissolution as the dominant Tl source responsible for the observed BTC.

S6. Sequential Extraction Results

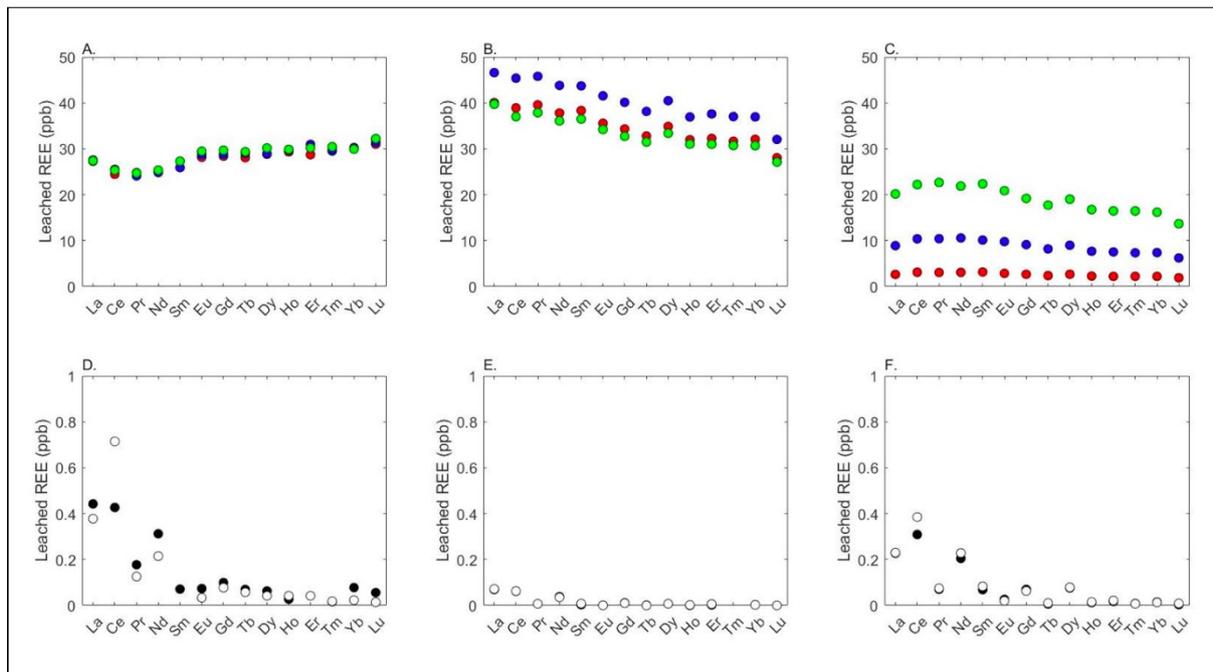


Figure S11. Sequential extraction results comparing REE fractionation in the pristine Zafit aquifer rock (Before Experiment) versus rock grains obtained from the column inlet (After Experiment). (A-C) Concentration of REEs in the post-experiment rock grains. (D-F) Background concentration of REEs in the pristine bulk rock. The comparison highlights a significant net accumulation of REEs in Step 2 (Carbonates), Step 3 (Hydrous iron oxides), and Step 4 (Crystalline iron oxides) following exposure to PGL. Note: Concentrations in Step 1 (Adsorbed/exchangeable) were negligible ($<1 \mu\text{g L}^{-1}$) in both cases.