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GABA-like immunoreactivity in *Biomphalaria*: Colocalization with tyrosine hydroxylase-like immunoreactivity in the feeding motor systems of panpulmonate snails

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Abstract

The simpler nervous systems of certain invertebrates provide opportunities to examine colocalized classical neurotransmitters in the context of identified neurons and well defined neural circuits. This study examined the distribution of γ-aminobutyric acid-like immunoreactivity (GABAli) in the nervous system of the panpulmonates *Biomphalaria glabrata* and *Biomphalaria alexandrina*, major intermediate hosts for intestinal schistosomiasis. GABAli neurons were localized in the cerebral, pedal, and buccal ganglia of each species. With the exception of a projection to the base of the tentacle, GABAli fibers were confined to the CNS. As GABAli was previously reported to be colocalized with markers for dopamine (DA) in five neurons in the feeding network of the euopisthobranch gastropod *Aplysia californica* (Díaz-Ríos, Oyola, & Miller, 2002), double-labeling protocols were used to compare the distribution of GABAli with tyrosine hydroxylase immunoreactivity (THli). As in *Aplysia*, GABAli-THli colocalization was limited to five neurons, all of which were located in the buccal ganglion. Five GABAli-THli cells were also observed in the buccal ganglia of two other intensively studied panpulmonate species, *Lymnaea stagnalis* and *Helisoma trivolvis*. These findings indicate that colocalization of the classical neurotransmitters GABA and DA in feeding central pattern generator (CPG) interneurons preceded the divergence of euopisthobranch and panpulmonate taxa. These observations also support the hypothesis that heterogastropod feeding CPG networks exhibit a common universal design.

KEYWORDS

Biomphalaria glabrata, *Biomphalaria alexandrina*, catecholamines, dopamine, *Helisoma trivolvis*, *Lymnaea stagnalis*, Immunostar RRID: AB 572268, rabbit anti-GABA antibody, schistosomiasis, Sigma-Aldrich RRID: AB 477652, tyrosine hydroxylase antibody

1 | INTRODUCTION

Increasing evidence supports the hypothesis that classical neurotransmitters can be colocalized in individual neurons (Borisovska & Westbrook, 2014; Gutíerrez, 2009; Seal & Edwards, 2006; Vaaga, Borisovska, & Westbrook, 2014). One such combination, γ–aminobutyric acid (GABA) with dopamine (DA), has been reported in several cell types within vertebrate nervous systems, including periglomerular cells of the mouse olfactory bulb (Borisovska, Bensen, Chong, & Westbrook, 2013; Liu, Plachez, Shao, Puche, & Shipley, 2013; Maher & Westbrook, 2008), retinal amacrine cells (Hirasawa, Contini, & Raviola, 2015; Hirasawa, Puopolo, & Raviola, 2009), mouse nigrostriatal and ventral tegmental cells (Tritsch, Ding, & Sabatini, 2012; Tritsch, Granger, & Sabatini, 2016; Trudeau et al., 2014), nerve terminals of the *Xenopus laevis* pituitary (de Rijk, van Strien, & Roubos, 1992), and neurons in the

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spinal cord of the sea lamprey (Barreiro-Iglesias, Villar-Cerviño, Anadón, & Rodicio, 2009). While proposed mechanisms of release from GABA-DA neurons range from independent nonsynaptic volume transmission in the retina to co-release from shared synaptic vesicles in the striatum, much remains unknown about the functional consequences of this neuronal phenotype and its occurrence across phylogeny (Kim et al., 2015).

It has been proposed the simpler nervous systems of certain invertebrates can provide opportunities to further examine colocalized classical neurotransmitters in the context of identified neurons and defined neural circuits (Miller, 2009). In gastropod molluscs, a neurotransmitter role for GABA was initially suggested by pharmacological studies in which it was found to produce both excitatory and inhibitory responses upon application to snail neurons (Gerschenfeld & Tauc, 1961; Walker, Crossman, Woodruff, & Kerkut, 1971; Walker, Aranza, Kerkut, & Woodruff, 1975). Biochemical approaches demonstrated the presence of GABA, its synthesis, and its uptake in the central nervous systems of several gastropod species (Cottrell, 1977; Dolezalova, Giacobini, & Stepita-Klauco, 1973; Osborne, Briel, & Neuhoff, 1971). The localization of GABA to specific neurons within gastropod nervous systems was demonstrated with autoradiographic and immunohistological techniques in *Planorbis* (Turner & Cottrell, 1978), *Limax* (Cooke & Gelperin, 1988), *Helisoma* (Richmond, Bulloch, Bauce, & Lukowiak, 1991), *Clione* (Arshavsky et al., 1993; Norekian, 1999), *Helix* (Hernádi, 1994), *Aplysia* (Díaz-Ríos et al., 1999), *Pleurobranchaea*, and four nudibranchs species (Gunaratne, Sakurai, & Katz, 2014; Gunaratne & Katz, 2016).

DA is also well established as major neurotransmitter in the gastropod central nervous system where it, like GABA, can produce both excitatory and inhibitory synaptic actions (Sweeney, 1963; Osborne & Cottrell, 1971; Ascher, 1972; Berry & Cottrell, 1973; McCaman, Ono, & McCaman, 1979). Early studies used aldehyde- or glyoxylate-induced fluorescence techniques to demonstrate the presence of catecholamine-containing neurons in both the central nervous system and periphery of several species (Chiang et al., 1974; Croll, 1987; Croll, Voronezhskaya, Hiripi, & Elekes, 1999; Salimova, Sakharov, Milosevic, Turpaev, & Rakic, 1987a; Salimova, Sakharov, Milosevic, & Rakic, 1987b; Tritt, Lowe, & Byrne, 1983). Biochemical analyses also demonstrated significant levels of catecholamines, particularly dopamine, within the nervous system of several gastropods (Chiang et al., 1974; Croll et al., 1999; McCaman et al., 1973; McCaman, 1984; Walker, 1986). Immunohistochemical localization of tyrosine hydroxylase (TH), the rate-limiting enzyme in catecholamine biosynthesis, was subsequently shown to label neurons that utilize DA as a neurotransmitter in gastropods (Croll et al., 1999; Croll, 2001).

In addition to their individual roles as gastropod neurotransmitters, evidence suggests that GABA and DA may co-exist in specific neurons in the euopisthobranch gastropod *Aplysia californica* (Díaz-Ríos et al., 2002). The colocalization of GABA and DA in five identified neurons within the feeding central pattern generator circuit of *Aplysia* enabled investigators to probe their respective contributions to synaptic signaling and specification of motor patterns in a multifunctional motor system (Due et al., 2004; Díaz-Ríos & Miller, 2005, 2006; Svensson et al., 2014).

The present study was designed with three objectives: (a) We first mapped the distribution of GABA-like immunoreactivity (li) in the nervous systems of two species of panpulmonate snails, *Biomphalaria glabrata* and *Biomphalaria alexandrina*. In previous studies, we fully mapped the localization of catecholamines in the nervous systems of these species (Vallejo et al., 2014) and showed that TH provided a reliable means of labeling neurons that utilize DA as a neurotransmitter (Vallejo et al., 2014). This work is part of our investigation of neurotransmitters in intermediate snail hosts for larval trematodes that cause the tropical disease schistosomiasis (see also Delgado, Vallejo, & Miller, 2012; Habib et al., 2015; Mansour et al., 2017). (b) With complete maps of putative, GABAergic and dopaminergic neurons in place, we next directly assessed the prospect of GABA-DA colocalization in *B. glabrata* using double labelling immunohistochemical techniques. (c) Finally, we also examined colocalization of GABA and THli in the feeding motor systems of *Lymnaea stagnalis* and *Helisoma trivolvis*, two panpulmonate species in which the neural control of feeding has been intensively studied.

2 | MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1 | Immunohistochemistry

Mature specimens (8–10 mm shell diameter) of *Biomphalaria glabrata*, *Biomphalaria alexandrina* and *Helisoma trivolvis* and juvenile specimens of *Lymnaea stagnalis* (also 8–10 mm shell length) were dissected in Petri dishes lined with Sylgard (Dow Chemical) and containing pond snail saline (see Delgado et al., 2012). *Biomphalaria* and *Lymnaea* ganglia were incubated in 0.5% protease type XIV (Sigma-Aldrich, St. Louis MO; Product #P5147) for 8–10 min at room temperature. Following washes (5×, 10–20 min) with snail saline, *Biomphalaria* and *Lymnaea* ganglia were fixed with 4% paraformaldehyde (4° C, 1 hr). They were then treated with a heat-induced epitope retrieval (HIER) protocol (Abcam IHC antigen retrieval protocol). Samples were incubated in a heated (60° C, 30 min) sodium citrate buffer (10 mM trisodium citrate dihydrate [Sigma-Aldrich], 0.05% Tween 20 [Fisher Scientific], pH 6.0). *Helisoma* tissues were fixed overnight in Zamboni's fixative (125 ml of 16% paraformaldehyde, 150 ml saturated picric acid solution per liter phosphate buffer, pH 7.3). They were not treated with protease and were not subjected to the HIER protocol.

For peripheral tissues, protocols were used as described previously (Habib et al., 2015). Tissues were incubated in .25% collagenase IV (Sigma-Aldrich, Product #C-5138) for 2–3 hr, then placed between two glass slides spaced apart with a small piece of modeling clay, incubated at 4° C for 25–30 min and then fixed for 1 hr by perfusing 4% paraformaldehyde between the slides. To remove the fixative, tissues were removed from between the slides, placed in microcentrifuge tubes and washed (5×, 30 min) with 0.5% PBS-T (PBS-T: 0.2 M PBS buffer, 0.5% Triton X-100).

GABAli was detected with a polyclonal rabbit antibody (RRID Sigma-Aldrich, Product #A2052) generated against GABA conjugated to bovine serum albumin (BSA). Dot blots showed that this antibody recognizes GABA and not BSA (Sigma-Aldrich data sheet). In

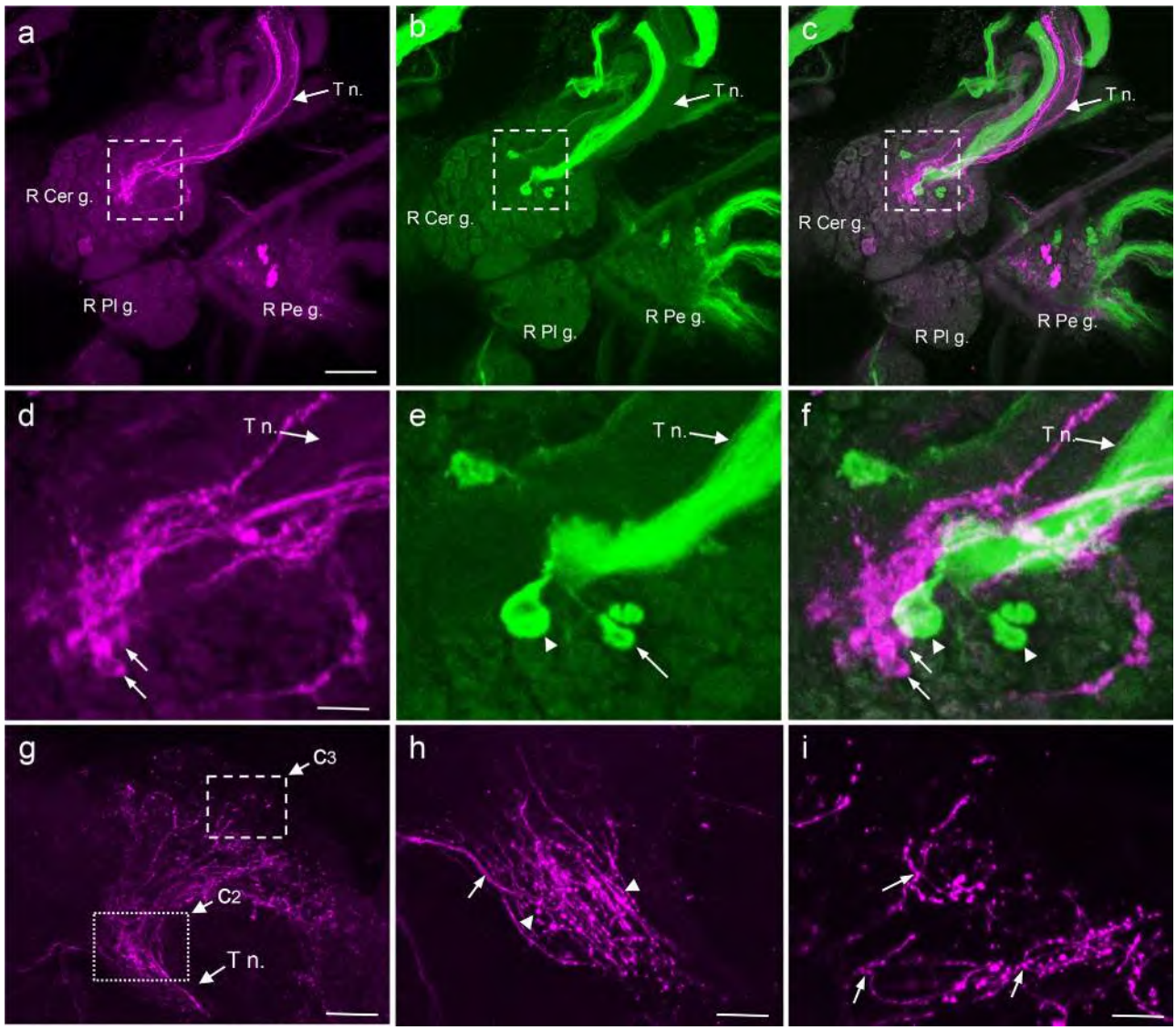

FIGURE 1 Comparison of GABAli and THli on the dorsal surface of the *B. glabrata* cerebral ganglion. (a) GABAli on the dorsal surface of the right cerebral ganglion (*R Cer g.*). Image also includes the ventral surface of the right pedal ganglion (*R Pd g.*) and the dorsal surface of the right pleural ganglion (*R Pl g.*). GABAli fibers of varying caliber were present in the tentacular nerve (*T n.*). *Calibration bar* = 100 μm applies to (a–c). (b) THli on the dorsal surface of the right pedal ganglion. A large bundle of THli fibers courses through the center of the T n. (c) Merge of (a) and (b) shows that the GABAli fibers and the THli bundle occupy distinct regions of the tentacular nerve. *Dashed rectangles* in (a–c) denote regions shown at higher magnification in (d–f), respectively. (d) Four to six small GABAli cells were embedded within the neuropil at the origin of the tentacular nerve. *Calibration bar* = 30 μm applies to (d–f). (e) A cluster of small THli neurons (*arrow*) and one larger cell (*arrowhead*) with a projection oriented toward the T n. were also located at the base of the nerve. (f) Merge of (d) and (e) shows that GABAli and THli are not colocalized in the neurons at the origin of the T n. (g) In the periphery, the GABAli fibers in the T n. reach the epithelium at the base of the tentacle. Dotted and dashed rectangles indicate the regions shown at higher magnification in (h) and (i), respectively. *Calibration bar* = 50 μm. (h) The GABAli fibers divide into smaller bundles and fan out to innervate the skin. Some of the larger caliber fibers are smooth (*arrow*), while *en passant* swellings are observed in many of the finer fibers (*arrowheads*). *Calibration bar* = 20 μm. (i) The fibers terminate as varicose fibers in the skin at the base of the tentacle. *Calibration bar* = 20 μm [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

gastropods, neurons labeled with this antibody have been shown to produce GABAergic synaptic signals (Jing, Vilim, Wu, Park, & Weiss, 2003; Wu et al., 2003). Catecholaminergic neurons were detected with a mouse monoclonal antibody (RRID: Immunostar, Stillwater MN; product No. 22941) generated against rat tyrosine hydroxylase [lot LNC1 purified from rat pheochromocytoma (PC12) cells]. This antibody is reported to possess wide species cross-reactivity, due to its recognition of a highly conserved epitope in the midportion of the TH molecule (Immunostar specification sheet 22914). It specifically labels neurons that are stained with several independent catecholaminergic markers, including the glyoxylic acid (Kabotyanski, Baxter, & Byrne, 1998; Rathouz & Kirk, 1988) and the formaldehyde (Fa)-glutaraldehyde (Glu) histofluorescent techniques (Croll, 2001; Díaz-Ríos et al., 2002; Goldstein & Schwartz, 1989). We previously reported that synaptic signals

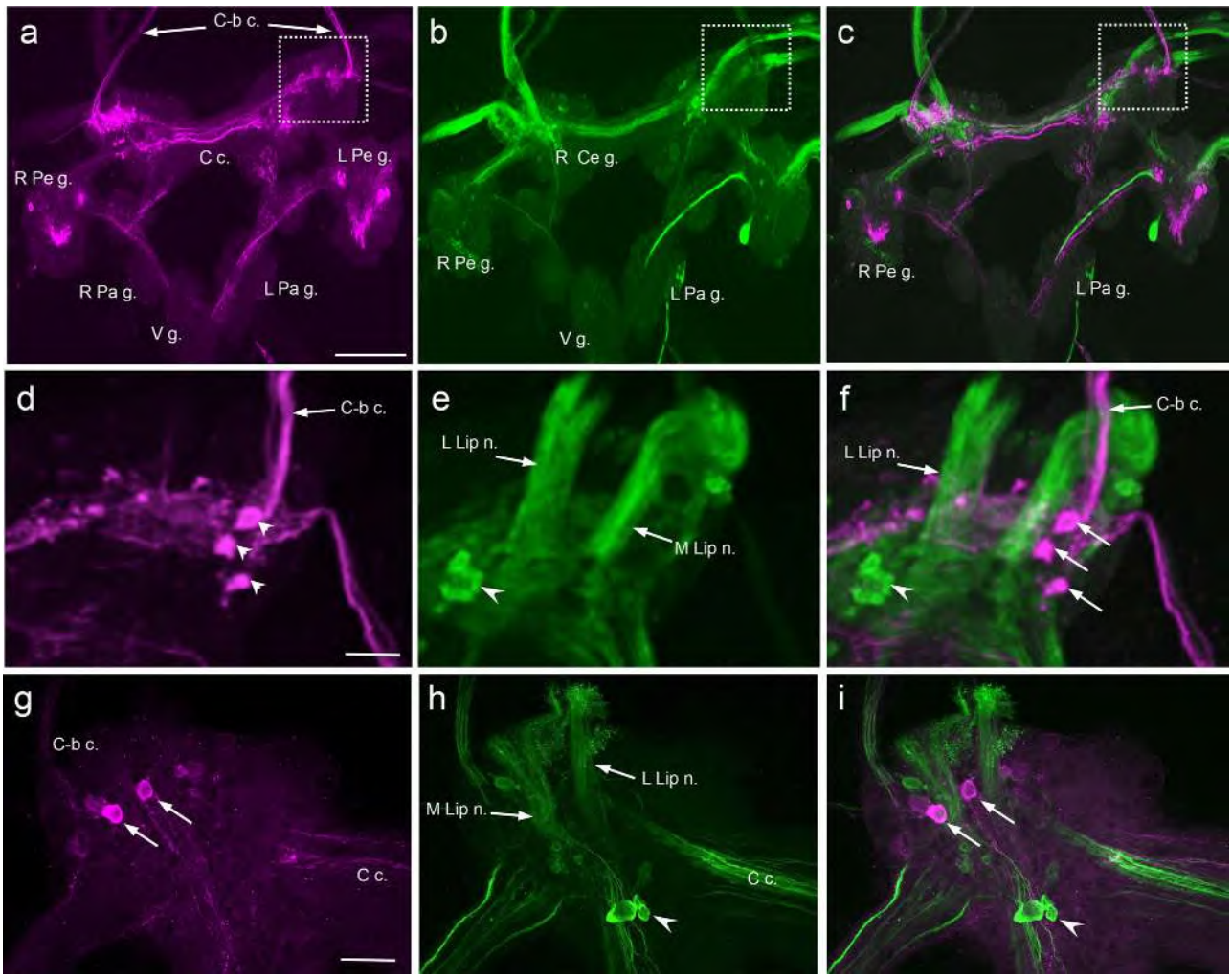

FIGURE 2 Comparison of GABAli and THli on the ventral surface of the *B. glabrata* cerebral ganglion. (a) GABAli on the ventral surface of the cerebral ganglion. The pedal commissure was severed and the left and right pedal ganglia (*L Pd g.*, *R Pd g.*) were reflected to expose the cerebral ganglion. The ventral surfaces of the remaining subesophageal ganglia are viewed, including the left parietal ganglion (*L Pa g.*), the right parietal ganglion (*R Pa g.*), and the visceral ganglion (*V g.*). GABAli fibers were present in the cerebral commissure (*C c.*) and in the cerebral-buccal connective (*C-b c.*). A dense GABAli neuropil was located in the anterolateral region of each hemiganglion, near the origin of the C-b c. *Calibration bar* = 200 μm applies to (a–c). (b) TH-like immunoreactivity; same view as panel (a). As with GABAli, THli is most prominent in the anterolateral quadrant of the cerebral ganglion. Major fiber tracts are present in the C c. and in the nerves projecting to the periphery. (c) Merge of (a) and (b). Dashed boxes in (a–c) denote region shown at higher magnification in (d–f). (d) GABAli in the anterolateral quadrant of the left cerebral ganglion. Two small cells (*arrowheads*) and one larger soma (*arrow*) are located near the origin of the C-b c. *Calibration bar* = 50 μm applies to (d–f). (e) THli fibers are prominent in the lateral lip nerve (*L Lip n.*) and in the medial lip nerve (*M Lip n.*). A cluster of small THli neurons is located close to the origin of the lateral lip nerve (*L lip n.*). (f) Merge of (d) and (e). Colocalization of GABAli and THli was not detected. (g) GABAli in the anterolateral quadrant of the right cerebral ganglion. Two GABAli cells (*arrows*) are located near the origin of the C-b c. *Calibration bar* = 50 μm applies to (g–i). (h) THli fibers are prominent in the lateral lip nerve (*L Lip n.*) and in the medial lip nerve (*M Lip n.*). A cluster of THli neurons is located close to the origin of the lateral lip nerve (*arrowhead*). (i) Merge of (g) and (h). GABAli and THli colocalization was not detected [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

produced by neurons labeled with this antibody in *B. glabrata* were blocked by the dopamine antagonist sulpiride (Vallejo et al., 2014).

Tissues of all species were incubated in a solution containing both primary antibodies (TH: 1:100; GABA: 1:200) diluted in PBS-Tx (0.25% Triton X-100, 1% Bovine Serum Albumin V (IgG free), 2% normal goat serum, 1% dimethyl sulfoxide in 0.2 M PBS) at 4° C for 5 days (Gunaratne et al., 2014; Vallejo et al., 2014). Antibody dilutions were based upon prior reports for wholemount immunohistochemistry of gastropod ganglia (Croll, 2001; Díaz-Ríos et al., 1999; Díaz-Ríos & Miller, 2002; Vallejo et al., 2014). Following repeated PBS-T washes (5×, 20 min, room temperature), tissues were incubated in the dark in second antibodies conjugated to fluorescent markers (Alexa 488 goat anti-mouse IgG (H + L) conjugate; Molecular Probes and Alexa 546 goat anti-rabbit IgG (H + L) conjugate; Molecular Probes). The second antibody dilutions ranged from 1:500 to 1:1,000. Following final PBS-T washes (5×, 20 min, room temperature) ganglia were placed in glycerol: PBS (6:1).

Laser scanning confocal image stacks of fluorescent immunohistochemical labeling were acquired on a Nikon A1R resonant scanning

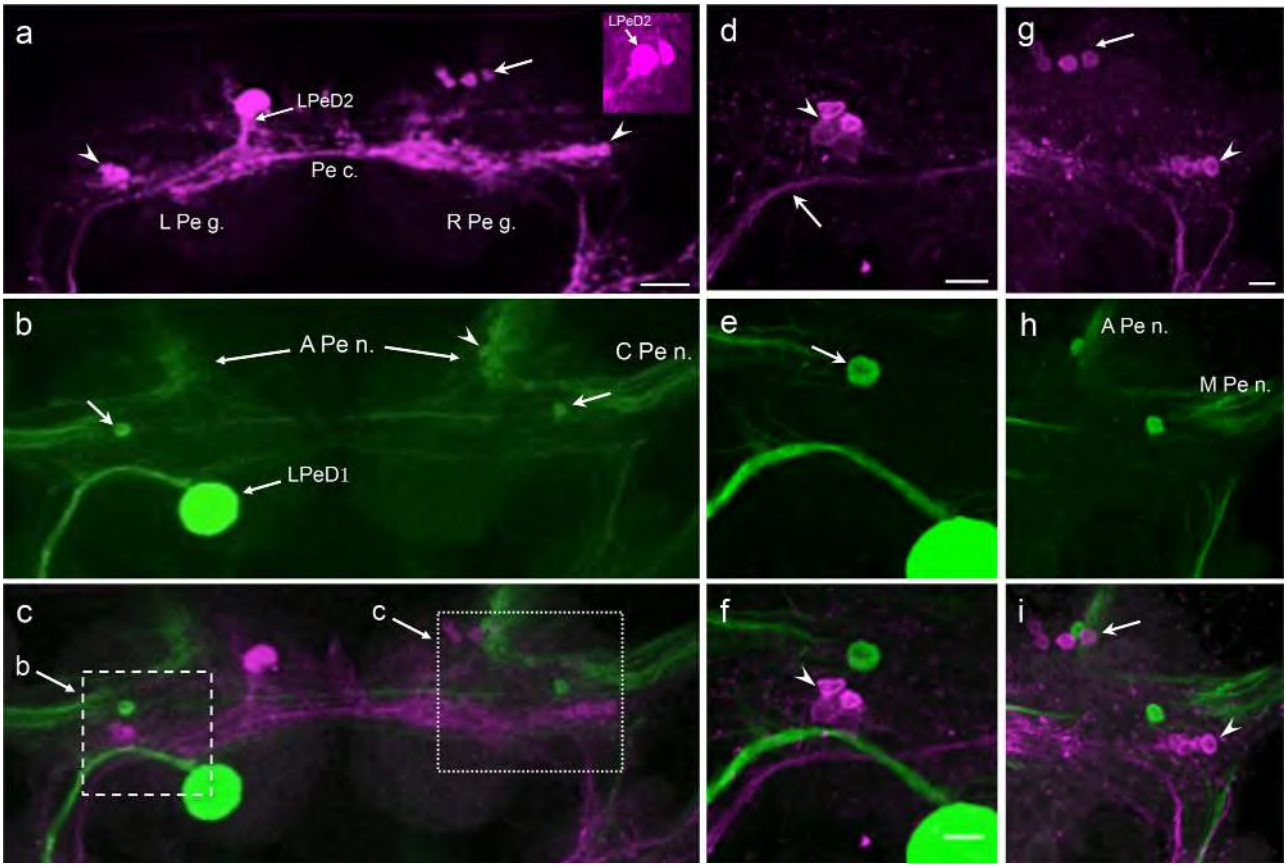

FIGURE 3 Comparison of GABAli and THli on the dorsal surface of the pedal ganglion. (a) A bilateral cluster of small (10–15 μm) neurons (*arrowheads*) was located in the lateral region of each pedal ganglion. While a second anteromedial cluster (*arrow*) was present in the right pedal ganglion (*R Pe g.*) near the origin of the anterior pedal nerve (*A Pe n.*), the left pedal ganglion (*L Pe g.*) contained a large (25–30 μm) unpaired neuron (labeled LPeD2) in a comparable position. A stout fiber projected from LPeD2 toward the pedal-pleural connective. A second small immunoreactive cell was often obscured by LPeD2 (inset from another preparation. (b) THli in the same preparation as (a). The unpaired giant LPeD1 neuron projects a large axon toward the left pedal-pleural connective. A solitary immunoreactive cell (10–15 μm) was located in the central region of each pedal ganglion (*arrows*) and a smaller cell (*arrowhead*) was embedded in the neuropil at the base of the anterior pedal nerve (*A Pe n.*). (c) Merge of (a) and (b). Dashed and dotted boxes indicate regions shown at higher magnification in (f) and (i), respectively. *Calibration bar* = 50 μm applies to (a–c). (d) The lateral cluster of GABAli neurons (*arrowhead*) in the left pedal ganglion was located near the curvature of the LPeD2 axon (*arrow*). (e) The solitary THli neuron (*arrow*) was located anterior to the curvature of the LPeD1 axon. (f) Merged image of (d) and (e) shows that the lateral THli neuron is not located within the lateral cluster of GABAli cells. *Calibration bar* = 30 μm applies to (d–f). (g) Higher magnification of the two clusters of GABAli neurons (*arrow*, *arrowhead*) on the dorsal surface of the right pedal ganglion. (h) Individual THli neurons are also located near the origins of the A Pe n. and the C Pe n. (i) Merged image of (g) and (h) shows that the dorsal THli immunoreactive neurons are near, but not part of the GABAli clusters. *Calibration bar* = 20 μm applies to (g–i) [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

confocal microscope using 10× and 20× objectives. Some high magnification images were taken using the NIS Elements Nyquist sampling setting. Whole brain images were collected using a Tile scan at 3 × 2 and Stitching at 15%. Series of optical sections at 0.5–1.5 μm intervals were used to make maximum intensity projections and merged images using the open source ImageJ Java-based image processing and analysis program (National Institutes of Health; http://imagej.nih.gov/ij/). Plates were assembled and contrast adjustment of figures was implemented using Microsoft PowerPoint (v. 14.0, Microsoft Corp., Redmond, WA). Schematic diagrams were created in Illustrator CS2 (Adobe Systems). Results reported in this study were observed in a minimum of 7 specimens of each species.

Protocols conducted on *B. glabrata* were approved by the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) of the University of Puerto Rico Medical Sciences Campus (UPR-MSC; Protocol #3220110). Protocols conducted on *B. alexandrina* were approved by the Animal Care Committee of Dalhousie University (Protocol #I13-06). UPR-MSC IACUC protocol #3220109 was approved for the experiments conducted on *Helisoma trivolvis* and *Lymnaea stagnalis*.

3 | RESULTS

As no consistent differences were observed between the localization of GABA-like immunoreactivity in *B. glabrata* and *B. alexandrina*, the following description is applicable to both species. Double labeling experiments were performed on *B. glabrata* to compare the locations of GABA-immunoreactive cells and neurons that exhibit TH-like

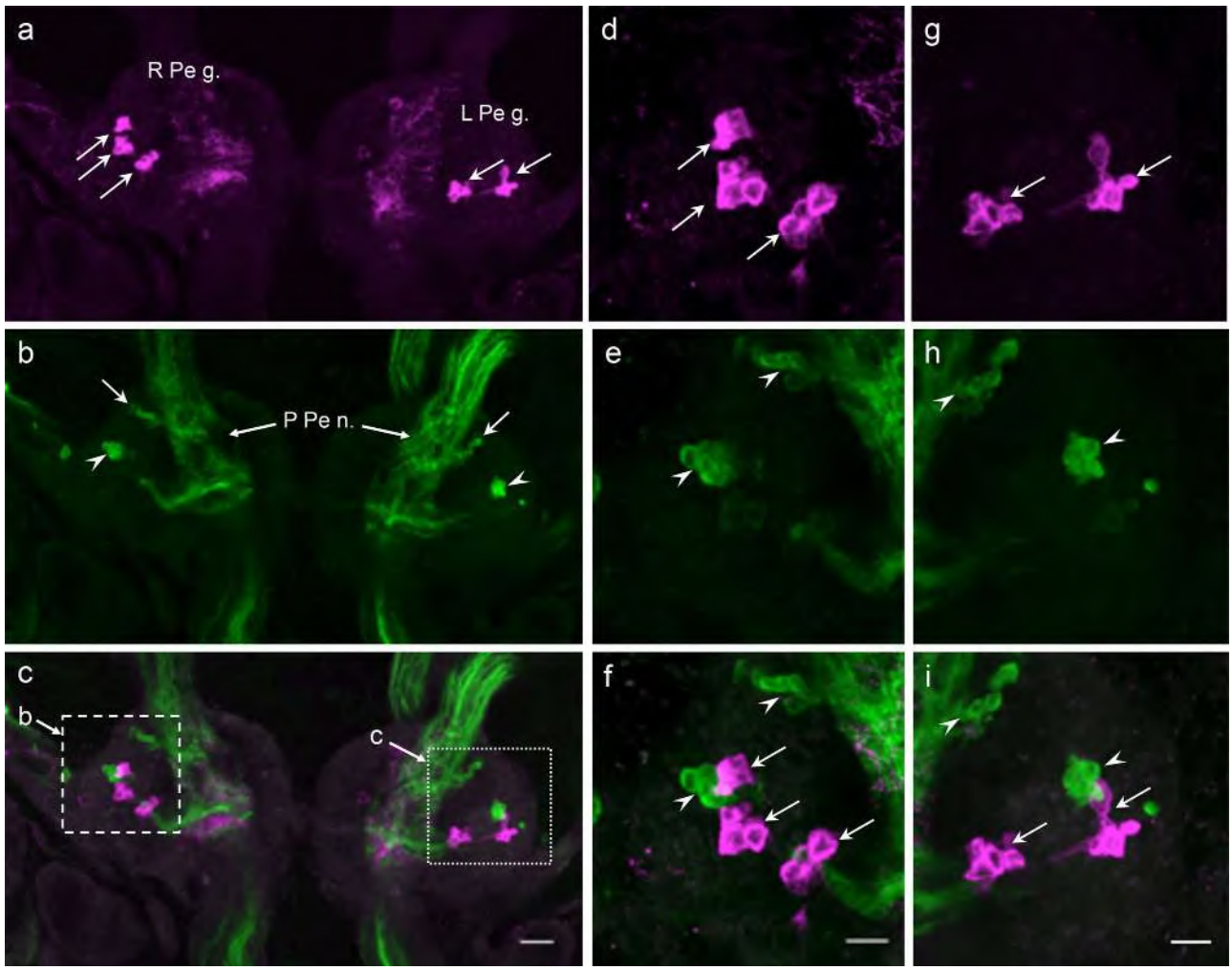

FIGURE 4 Comparison of GABAli and THli on the ventral surface of the pedal ganglion. (a) Right and left pedal ganglia (*R Pe g.*, *L Pe g.*). Three clusters of four to six small (10–15 μm) GABAli cells (*arrows*) were located in the lateral R Pe g. Two clusters (*arrows*) were located in similar positions in the L Pe g. (b) THli on the ventral surface of the pedal ganglia; same preparation as (a). Two clusters of six to eight small (10–15 μm) cells were present in each pedal ganglion, one near the origin of the posterior pedal nerve (*P Pe n.*; *arrows*) and another in the anterolateral quadrant (*arrowheads*). (c) Merged (a) and (b) images show that the lateral GABAli and THli clusters are contiguous. Dashed and dotted rectangles indicate the regions shown at higher magnification in (d–f) and (g–i), respectively. Calibration bar = 40 μm applies to (a–c). (d) Three clusters of GABAli neurons (*arrows*) on the ventral surface of the right pedal ganglion. (e) Two clusters of THli neurons (*arrowheads*) on the ventral surface of the right pedal ganglion. (f) Merge of (d) and (e) shows that the lateral THli and GABAli clusters are contiguous, but the GABAli cluster appears to be more superficial. *Calibration bar* = 20 μm applies to (d–f). (g) Two clusters of GABAli neurons (*arrows*) on the ventral surface of the left pedal ganglion. (h) Two clusters of THli neurons (*arrowheads*) on the ventral surface of the right pedal ganglion. (i) Merge of (g) and (h) shows that the lateral THli and GABAli clusters are contiguous, but the THli cluster appears to be more superficial. *Calibration bar* = 20 μm applies to (g–i) [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

F1-F7 immunoreactivity (Figures 1–7). In some cases, higher definition of GABAli cell structure was obtained in single labeling experiments on *B. alexandrina* (Figure 1g–i).

3.1 | Cerebral ganglion

On the dorsal surface of the cerebral ganglion, GABAli fibers were present in the tentacular nerve (*T n.*) and in four to six small neurons near the origin of the T n. (Figure 1a,d, *arrows*). As reported by Vallejo et al. (2014), the T n. also contained a bundle of THli fibers that originated from small peripheral cells in the tentacle epithelium. The THli fiber bundle was more compact than the GABAli axons and occupied a distinct portion of the nerve (Figure 1b,e). THli neurons were also observed near the origin of the T n. (Figure 1b,e, *arrowheads*). Merged images of GABAli and THli did not reveal instances of colocalization on the dorsal surface of the cerebral ganglion (Figure 1c,f).

Experiments were performed to trace the T n. GABAli fibers to the periphery (Figure 1g–i). A loose bundle of axons projected to the epithelium at the base of the tentacle (Figure 1g). The fibers were heterogeneous in diameter, with some having smooth contours and others *en passant* varicosities. They underwent extensive branching and terminated as varicose fibers below the surface of the epithelium at the

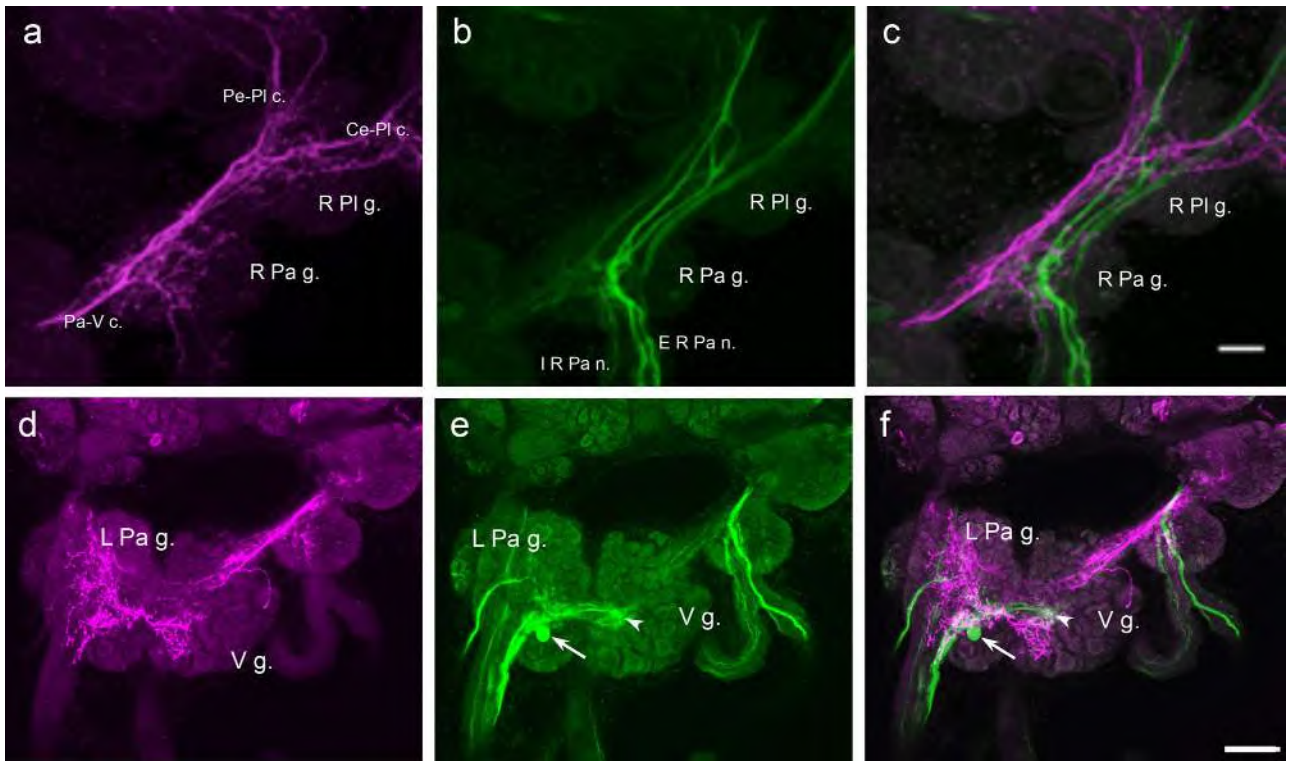

FIGURE 5 Comparison of GABAli and THli the pleural, parietal, and visceral ganglia. (a) GABAli in the right pleural and right parietal ganglia (*R Pl g.*, *R Pa g.*). Large fibers course through the ganglia, giving rise to extensive central neuropils. The largest fibers could be followed into the pedal-pleural connective (*Pe-Pl c.*), the cerebral-pleural connective (*Ce-Pl c.*) and the parietal-visceral connective (*Pa-V c.*). No immunoreactive cell bodies were detected. (b) THli in the same preparation. Large fibers course through the R Pl g. and R Pa g. and into the external and internal right parietal nerves (*E R Pa n.*, *I R Pa n.*). (c) Merge of (a) and (b) panels shows that the GABAli and THli fiber systems are largely segregated into the anterior and posterior regions of the ganglia, respectively. While there is a major projection of THli fibers toward the periphery, the GABAli fibers are confined to the CNS. A few GABAli immunoreactive fibers enter the I R Pa n. but terminate within a short distance. *Calibration bar* = 30 μm applies to (a–c). (d) GABAli in the left parietal ganglion (*L Pa g.*) and visceral ganglion (*V g.*). An extensive network of fibers is present throughout the central neuropil of both ganglia. No GABAli somas were detected and no fibers were present in the peripheral nerves**. e**: THli in the L Pa g. and V g. The arborization of THli is not as extensive as the GABAli neuropil. THli cells are embedded within the neuropil of each ganglion (*arrow*, *arrowhead*; see also Vallejo et al., 2014) and large THli fibers project into the peripheral nerves of the L Pa g. (f) Merge of (d) and (e) images. No indication of colocalization was observed. *Calibration bar* = 50 μm applies to (d–f) [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

base of the tentacle (Figure. 1h,i). It has been proposed that the major site of chemoreceptors for food detection in *Biomphalaria* is located in the body wall at the base of the tentacle, suggesting a role for GABA in processing sensory information (Townsend, 1974; see Discussion). No peripheral GABli cell bodies were detected and no GABAli fibers projected into the tentacle.

On the ventral surface of the cerebral ganglion, a dense network of GABAli fibers was located in the anterolateral region of each hemiganglion (Figure 2a). Two to three small (10–20 μm) GABAli neurons (Figure 2d, *arrowheads*) were observed near the origin of the cerebral-buccal connective (see also Figure 2g). Four to five GABAli fibers were present in each cerebral-buccal connective (C-b c.) and in the cerebral commissure (C c.). No GABAli fibers were detected in the medial lip nerve (Figure 2d–f, M Lip n.), the lateral lip nerve (Figure 2d–f, L Lip n.), or the penis nerve.

A previous study showed that prominent THli fiber systems in the lip nerves originate predominantly from peripheral neurons (Vallejo et al., 2014). A group of THli central neurons was observed in the anterolateral region the cerebral ganglion, however (Figure 2e,h, *arrowheads)*, prompting double-labeling experiments to test for the presence of GABA-TH colocalization. Merged images of GABAli and THli did not reveal instances of colocalization (Figure 2c,f,i).

3.2 | Pedal ganglion

Two tightly apposed GABAli cell bodies were positioned on the dorsal surface of the left pedal ganglion between the origin of the anterior pedal nerve and the pedal commissure (Figure 3a, inset). The larger (25–30 μm) of these cells, termed LPeD2, was the largest GABAli neuron in the entire CNS. It was located in a slightly more lateral position than its smaller (15–20 μm) neighbor. LPeD2 gave rise to a large axon that coursed in a posterolateral direction toward the pedal-pleural connective, medial to the axon of the giant dopaminergic cell LPeD1 (Vallejo et al., 2014; Figure 3a–c, d–f).

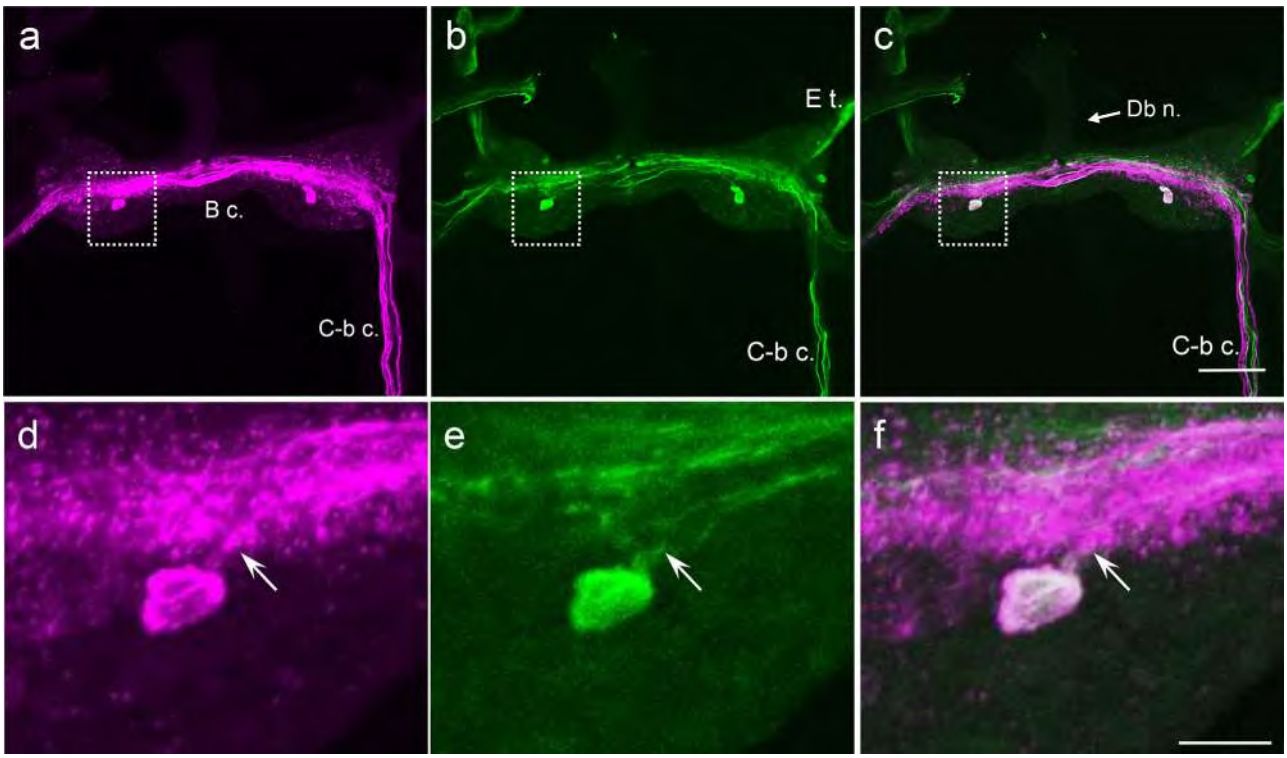

FIGURE 6 Comparison of GABAli and THli on the ventral surface of the *B. glabrata* buccal ganglion. (a) A prominent system of GABAli fibers courses through the buccal commissure (*B c.*) giving rise to finer networks in the central core of each hemiganglion. Three to five fibers were present in the cerebral-buccal connective (*C-b c.*) and one cell body was located posterior to the central neuropil in each hemiganglion. No GABAli fibers were detected in the buccal nerves. (b) THli fibers also coursed through the central neuropil of the buccal ganglion. Several fibers were present in the esophageal trunk (*E t.*) and in the C-b c. One THli neuron was located posterior to the fiber systems in each hemiganglion. (c) Merge of images (a) and (b) confirmed that GABAli and THli are colocalized in the two ventral cell bodies. Dotted boxes in (a–c) indicate region shown at higher magnification in panels (d–f). *Calibration bar* = 100 μm applies to (a–c). (d) Higher magnification of the GABAli neuron on the ventral surface of the right buccal hemiganglion. A process projected in the anteromedial direction toward the central neuropil (*arrow*). (e) THli in the same field of view as (d). (f) Merge of (d) and (e) confirms colocalization of GABAli and THli in a single ventral neuron. *Calibration bar* = 25 μm applies to (d–f) [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

A cluster of four smaller (10–15 μm) posterolateral GABAli neurons was located near the axon of LPeD2 (Figure 3a,d, *arrowheads*). A similar cluster was observed in the right pedal ganglion near the confluence of the central pedal nerve and the pedal-pleural connective (Figure 3a,g, *arrowheads*). A second group of small (10–15 μm) GABAli neurons was present in the right pedal ganglion near the origin of the anterior pedal nerve (Figure 3a,g, *arrows*). No GABAli fibers were detected in the pedal nerves.

In a prior report, small THli neurons were observed in the dorsolateral regions of the pedal ganglion near the origins of the pedal nerves (Vallejo et al., 2014). Preparations that were labeled for GABAli (Figure 3a,d,g) were therefore processed for THli (Figure 3b,e,h) in order to determine the relative positions of these two systems and to test for their colocalization. Single THli neurons were located near both posterolateral GABAli clusters (Figure 3i, *arrowhead*) and within the cluster at the base of the anterior pedal nerve (Figure 3i, *arrow*), but in no case was THli colocalized with GABAli.

On the ventral surface of the pedal ganglia, clusters of small (10–15 μm) GABAli neurons were observed lateral to the origin of each posterior pedal nerve (Figure 4a,d,g, *arrows*). While similar groups of THli cells were located in close proximity (Figure 4b,e,h, *arrowheads*), no instances of colocalization were detected when images of GABAli and THli were merged (Figure 4c,f,i).

3.3 | Pleural, parietal, and visceral ganglia

No GABAli cells were detected in the pleural, parietal, or visceral ganglia of *B. glabrata*. A rich network of GABAli fibers coursed through the pleural and parietal ganglia, giving rise to fine branches and terminals (Figure 5a). While several THli fibers were also observed, they did not exhibit extensive branching (Figure 5b). When images of GABAli and THli were merged (Figure 5c), the THli fibers appeared to occupy more lateral positions and no clear instances of colocalization were detected. Several large THli fibers projected to the parietal nerves and a few fine GABAergic axons terminated in the initial segments of these nerves.

GABAli fibers and terminals were present throughout the central regions of the visceral and left parietal ganglia (Figure 5d). The THli systems in these ganglia exhibited less branching (Figure 5e). While several THli fibers projected to the peripheral nerves, the GABAli system was confined to the CNS (Figure 5f). No evidence for GABAli-THli colocalization was detected.

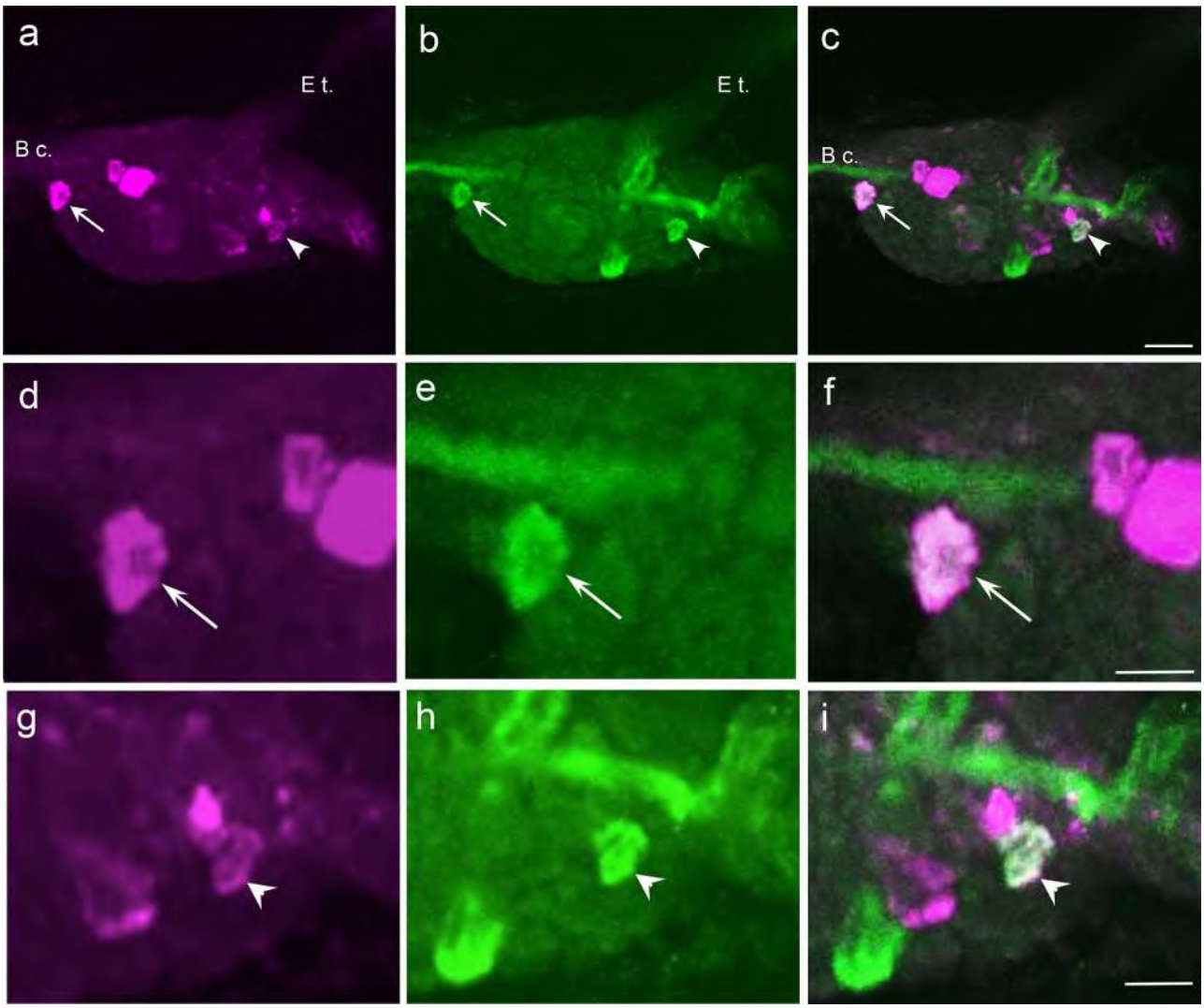

FIGURE 7 Comparison of GABAli and THli on the dorsal surface of the *B. glabrata* buccal ganglion. (a) Four to six GABAli neurons were present on the dorsal surface of the right hemiganglion. (b) THli was present in three to five dorsal neurons, including one lateral cell (*arrowhead*) and an unpaired cell near the midline (*arrow*) that appeared to correspond to GABAli neurons. (c) A merge of (a) and (b) confirmed GABAli-THli colocalization in two dorsal cells. *Calibration bar* = 50 μm applies to (a–c). (d) Higher magnification of the medial GABAli cell shown in (a). (e) THli in the same field as (d). (f) Merge of (d) and (e) confirms GABAli-THli colocalization. Two GABAli cells that do not contain THli are also shown. *Calibration bar* = 25 μm applies to (d–f). (g) Higher magnification of the lateral GABAli cell shown in (a). (b) THli in the same field as (g). (i) Merge of (g) and (h) confirms GABAli-THli colocalization. *Calibration bar* = 25 μm applies to (g–i) [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

3.4 | Buccal ganglion

A prominent system of GABAli fibers coursed through the core of the buccal ganglion (Figure 6a). Large caliber fibers were present in the cerebral-buccal connective and crossing the buccal commissure. No GABAli fibers were present in the buccal nerves.

A single GABAli neuron was located on the ventral surface of each buccal hemiganglion (Figure 6a,d). A fiber projected from each cell in the medial direction joining the central GABAli neuropil. When preparations were processed for THli, only two ventral neurons were labeled (Figure 6b,e; see also Vallejo et al., 2014). Merging the images for GABAli and THli showed that they were labeling the same cells (Figure 6c,f).

Five to seven GABAli neurons were dispersed across the dorsal surface of each buccal hemiganglion (Figure 7a). While labeling of the two hemiganglia was generally symmetrical, one buccal GABAli neuron was only present in the right hemiganglion, adjacent to the buccal commissure (Figure 7a, *arrow*). When THli was compared to GABAli, colocalization was observed in the unpaired cell (Figure 7b,c,e,f, *arrows*) and in one lateral neuron near the origin of the C-b c. (Figure 7b,c,e,f, *arrowheads*).

3.5 | Buccal ganglia of lymnaea stagnalis and helisoma trivolvis

The limited occurrence of GABAli –THli colocalization in five buccal ganglion neurons in *B. glabrata* was in agreement with our previous observations in the marine euopisthobranch *Aplysia californica* (Díaz-Ríos et al., 2002; Díaz-Ríos & Miller 2005, 2006). It was therefore of

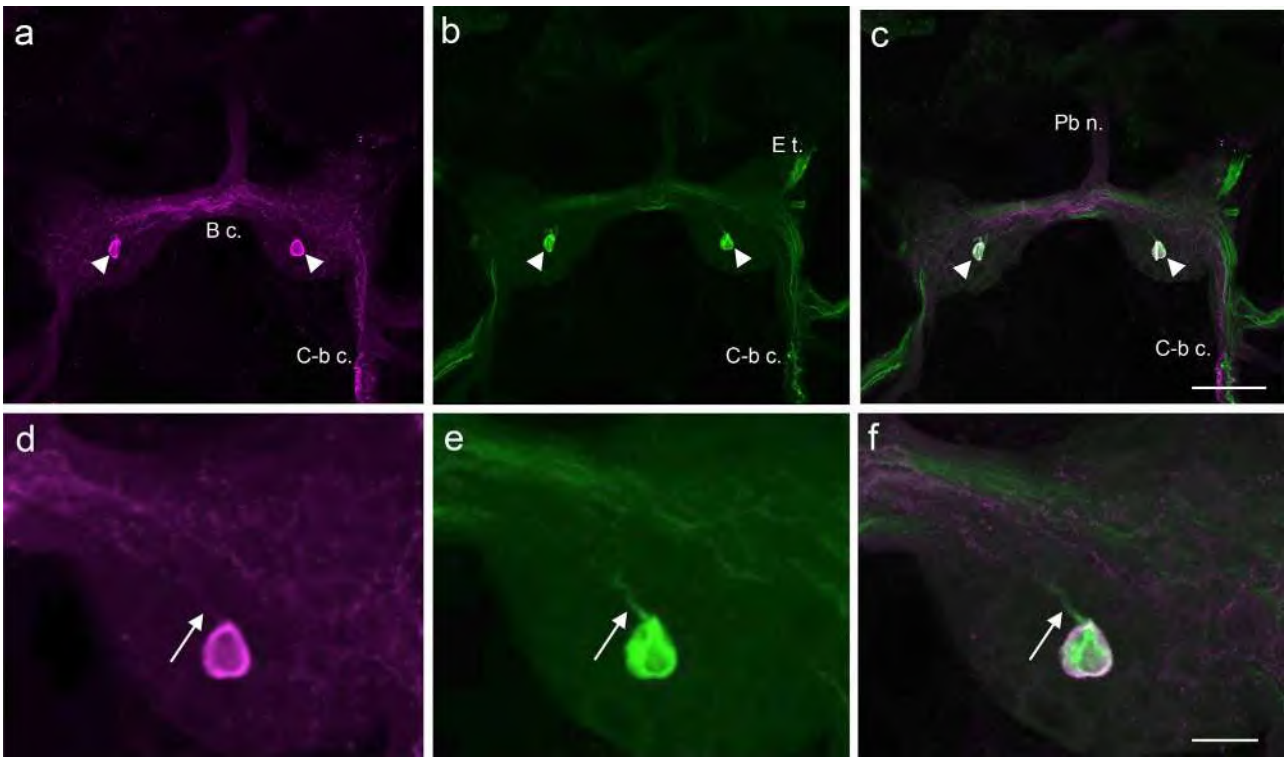

FIGURE 8 Comparison of GABAli and THli on the ventral surface of the *Lymnaea stagnalis* buccal ganglion. (a) A prominent system of GABAli fibers courses through the buccal commissure (*B c.*) and three to five fibers are present in the cerebral-buccal connective (*C-b c.*). One cell body was located posterior to the central neuropil in each hemiganglion (*arrowheads*). No GABAli fibers were detected in the buccal nerves. (b) THli fibers also coursed through the central neuropil of buccal ganglion. Several fibers were present in the esophageal trunk (*E t.*) and in the C-b c. One THli neuron was located posterior to the fiber systems in each hemiganglion (*arrowheads*). (c) Merge of images (a) and (b) confirmed that GABAli and THli are colocalized in the two ventral cell bodies. *Calibration bar* = 100 μm applies to (a–c). (d) Higher magnification of the GABAli neuron on the ventral surface of the right buccal hemiganglion. A process projected in the anteromedial direction toward the buccal commissure (*arrow*). (e) THli in the same field of view as (d). (f) Merge of (d) and (e) confirms colocalization of GABAli and THli in a single ventral neuron. *Calibration bar* = 25 μm, applies to (d–f) [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

interest to examine whether this pattern of colocalization was also present in the buccal ganglia of other panpulmonate species in which the feeding central pattern generators have been intensively studied.

In *Lymnaea stagnalis*, a single GABAli neuron was located on the ventral surface of each buccal hemiganglion (Figure 8a,d). THli was also observed in only two ventral cells (Figure 8b,e). Merging the images for GABAli and THli showed that both protocols were labeling the same pair of cells (Figure 8c,f). The ventral GABAli – THli cells of *Lymnaea* were located in a similar position as those of *Biomphalaria*, slightly posterior to the central fiber system. As observed with the ventral GABAli – THli cells of *B. glabrata* (Figure 6), a fiber projected in the anteromedial direction toward the buccal commissure (Figure 8d–f, *arrows*).

Another four to six GABAli cells were labeled on the dorsal surface of each *Lymnaea* buccal hemiganglion (Figure 9a). Most of the dorsal GABAli cells were located in the lateral portion of the ganglion, near the confluence of the C-b c. and the dorsobuccal nerve (Db n.). However, one medial unpaired GABAli neuron was present in the left hemiganglion adjacent to the buccal commissure (Figure 9a, *arrow*). When ganglia were processed for THli, double-labeling was detected in one of the lateral GABAli neurons (Figure 9a–c, *arrowheads*, 9d–f, *arrows*) and in the medial unpaired cell (Figure 9a–c, *arrows*).

The colocalization of GABAli and THli was also observed in five neurons in the buccal ganglion of *Helisoma trivolvis* (Figure 10). A bilateral pair of cells on the ventral surface was located near the fiber tract connecting the two hemiganglia (Figure 10a–c; *arrows*). On the dorsal surface, GABAli and THli were colocalized in a pair of lateral neurons (Figure 10d–f, *arrows*) and in an unpaired medial cell in the right hemiganglion (Figure 10d–f, *arrowheads*). The medial GABA-THli neuron gave rise to two fibers that joined the central tract (Figure 10g–i, *arrows*).

4 | DISCUSSION

4.1 | GABA-like immunoreactivity in the CNS of biomphalaria spp

The distributions of GABAli neurons in *B. glabrata* and *B. alexndrina* were indistinguishable (Figure 11). GABAli cell bodies were limited to the cerebral, pedal, and buccal ganglia, in agreement with observations in other panpulmonate species, such as *Helix pomatia* (Hernádi, 1994), *Helisoma trivolvis* (Richmond et al., 1991), and *Limax maximus* (Cooke & Gelperin, 1988). A broader distribution, including cells in the parietal

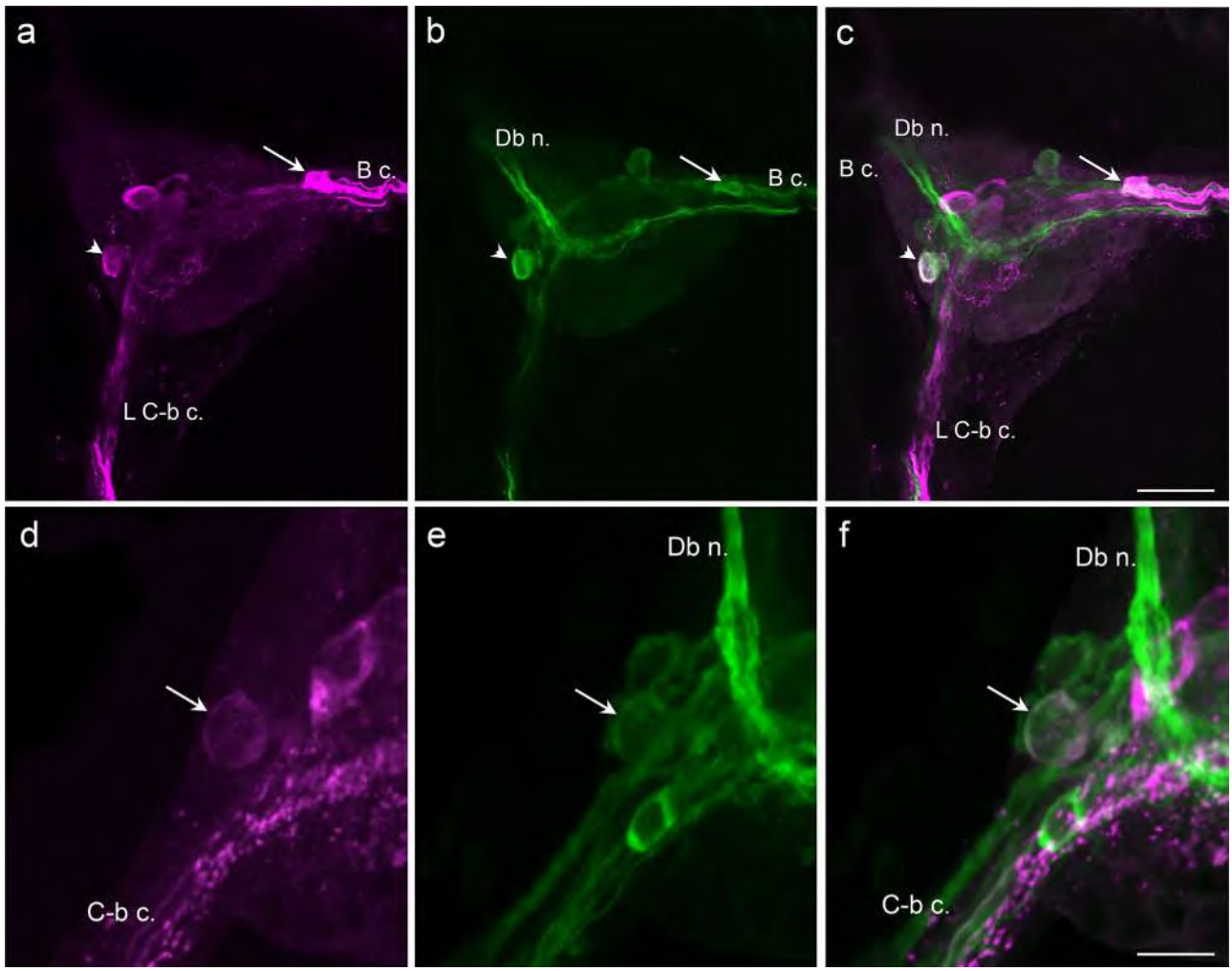

FIGURE 9 Comparison of GABAli and THli on the dorsal surface of the *Lymnaea stagnalis* buccal ganglion. (a) Four to six GABAli neurons were present on the dorsal surface of the left hemiganglion. (b) THli was present in three to five dorsal neurons, including one lateral cell (*arrowhead*) and an unpaired cell near the midline (*arrow*) that appeared to correspond to GABAli neurons. (c) A merge of (a) and (b) confirmed GABAli-THli colocalization in two dorsal cells. *Calibration bar* = 100 μm applies to (a–c). (d) Higher magnification of the lateral GABAli cell shown in (a). (e) THli in the same field as (d). (f) Merge of (d) and (e) confirms GABAli-THli colocalization. GABAli cells that do not contain THli and THli cells that do not contain GABAli are also shown. *Calibration bar* = 25 μm applies to (d–f) [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

and visceral ganglia, was reported in *Lymnaea stagnalis* (Hatakeyama & Ito, 2000).

The presence of GABAli fibers in each of the connectives joining the central ganglia suggests an involvement of GABAergic neurons in the coordination or specification of behavior in *Biomphalaria*. Two GABAergic cerebral-buccal interneurons (CBIs), termed CBI-12 and CBI-3, were identified in *Aplysia* (Euopisthobranchia, Anaspidea) and shown to exert specific GABA-mediated actions on the feeding CPG (Jing et al., 2003; Wu et al., 2003; see also Narusuye et al. 2005). In *Clione limacina* (Euopisthobranchia, Pteropoda) a GABAergic CBI termed Cr-BM coordinates three motor programs that implement an elaborate carnivorous motor program (Norekian & Malyshev, 2005). The presence of GABAli fibers in the cerebral-buccal connective and GABAli cell bodies near the origin of the C-b c. indicates that similar higher order GABAergic control of feeding could operate in *Biomphalaria* and other panpulmonates.

The presence of major GABAergic tracts in the commissures of the cerebral, pedal, and buccal ganglia is consistent with observations in other panpulmonate species as well as in euopisthobranchs and nudibranchs (Cooke & Gelperin, 1988; Díaz-Ríos et al., 1999; Gunaratne et al., 2014; Gunaratne & Katz, 2016; Richmond et al., 1991). These paired ganglia control motor behaviors such as feeding and locomotion that require bilateral coordination. The participation of GABAergic signaling in maintaining bilateral coordination has been demonstrated in the buccal CPG of *Aplysia* where two GABAergic interneurons, B34 and B40, exert predominant synaptic actions in the contralateral buccal hemiganglion (Hurwitz, Kupfermann, & Susswein, 1997; Jing et al., 2003). Interestingly, both B40 and B34 also project to the cerebral ganglion via the contralateral cerebral-buccal connective (Hurwitz et al., 1997; Jing et al., 2003). The presence of GABA in buccal-cerebral interneurons (BCIs) as well as CBIs (see above) indicates that this neurotransmitter system plays a bidirectional role in interganglionic signaling in the *Aplysia*

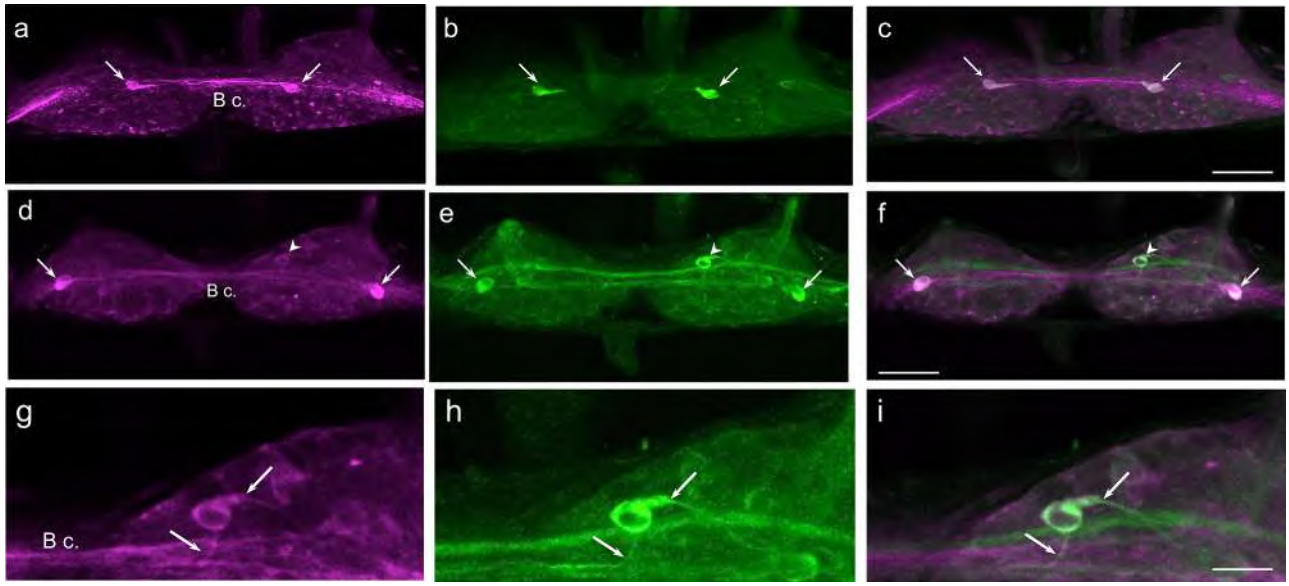

FIGURE 10 Comparison of GABAli and THli in the buccal ganglion of *Helisoma trivolvis*. (a) A prominent system of GABAli fibers courses through the buccal commissure (*B c.*). One cell body was located slightly posterior to the central neuropil in each hemiganglion (*arrows*). (b) One THli neuron was located in the medial region of each hemiganglion (*arrows*). (c) Merge of images (a) and (b) confirmed that GABAli and THli are colocalized in the two ventral cell bodies. *Calibration bar* = 100 μm applies to (a–c). (d) Three to four GABAli cell bodies were observed on the dorsal surface of the *Helisoma* buccal ganglion, including two lateral cells (*arrows*) and one unpaired cell in the right hemiganglion near the B c. (*arrowhead*). A process projected in the anteromedial direction toward the buccal commissure (*arrow*). (e) THli in the same field of view as (d). (f) Merge of (d) and (e) confirms colocalization of GABAli and THli in the two lateral cells (*arrows*) and the unpaired cell (*arrowhead*). *Calibration bar* = 100 μm, applies to (d–f). (g) Higher magnification of the unpaired GABAli neuron. Arrows indicate two projections. (h) Unpaired THli neuron. (i) Merge of (g) and (h) confirms GABAli-THli colocalization. *Calibration bar* = 30 μm applies to (g–i) [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

feeding system. Further characterization of GABAergic CBIs and BCIs in the panpulmonates should increase our understanding of how this neurotransmitter system contributes to feedforward and feedback signaling between higher order regulatory elements and the feeding CPGs.

In addition to a GABAergic involvement in the central control of motor systems, the projection of fibers to the periphery via each tentacular nerve suggests a limited sensory function. The termination of this bundle in a region of the skin near the base of the tentacle is in agreement with previous studies in *Biomphalaria* that found the skin behind the origin of the tentacle to be highly sensitive to food application (Townsend, 1974). As snails continued to orient toward applied food following ablation of the tentacles, this skin region was proposed to be the major chemoreceptive organ for food-finding. The tentacles were suggested to function mainly to guide chemostimulants to their base via ciliary currents (Townsend, 1974). While pharmacological evidence supports a role for GABA in chemoreceptive function in pulmonates (Ito, Kimura, Watanabe, Kirino, & Ito, 2004; Nezlin & Voronezhskaya, 1997), GABAergic innervation of cephalic sensory organs has not been reported in other species.

4.2 | GABAli-THli colocalization

Colocalization of GABAli and THli was previously observed in the euopisthobranch *Aplysia californica* (Díaz-Ríos et al., 2002). While GABAli and THli neurons were present throughout the central nervous system of *Aplysia*, their colocalization was limited to five neurons in the paired buccal ganglia. The present study surveyed the distribution of GABAli *Biomphalaria glabrata*, *Helisoma trivolvis*, and *Lymnaea stagnalis* and found that colocalized GABAli and THli was similarly limited to five buccal neurons. In *Aplysia*, GABAli-THli colocalization occurs in two identified pairs of interneurons, termed B20 and B65. Similar to the GABAergic neurons B34 and B40 described above, B65 is a dorsal cell that projects to the cerebral ganglion via the contralateral C-b connective. B20 is a bipolar ventral cell that projects to both C-b connectives. To the extent that their anatomy can be determined from our experiments, the positions, shapes, and projections of the GABAli – THli cells observed in the panpulmonates are highly similar to the morphological properties of the GABA-DA neurons in *Aplysia*.

B20 and B65 are capable of initiating coordinated buccal motor patterns (Kabotyanski et al., 1998; Teyke et al., 1993). Moreover, each is thought to play a critical role in determining the functional output of the feeding CPG (Due et al., 2004; Jing & Weiss, 2001; Kabotyanski et al., 1998; Proekt et al., 2004). Rapid excitatory postsynaptic potentials (EPSPs) produced by both B65 and B20 in buccal motor neuron targets were occluded by dopamine, but not GABA, and blocked by the dopamine antagonist sulpiride (Due et al., 2004; Díaz-Ríos & Miller 2005). It was therefore proposed that these rapid EPSPs were mediated by dopamine. GABA, acting through GABAB-like receptors and protein kinase C, was shown to modulate the rapid dopaminergic EPSPs in a target specific manner (Díaz-Ríos & Miller, 2005, 2006; Svensson et al., 2014). The comprehensive understanding of the anatomy, physiology,

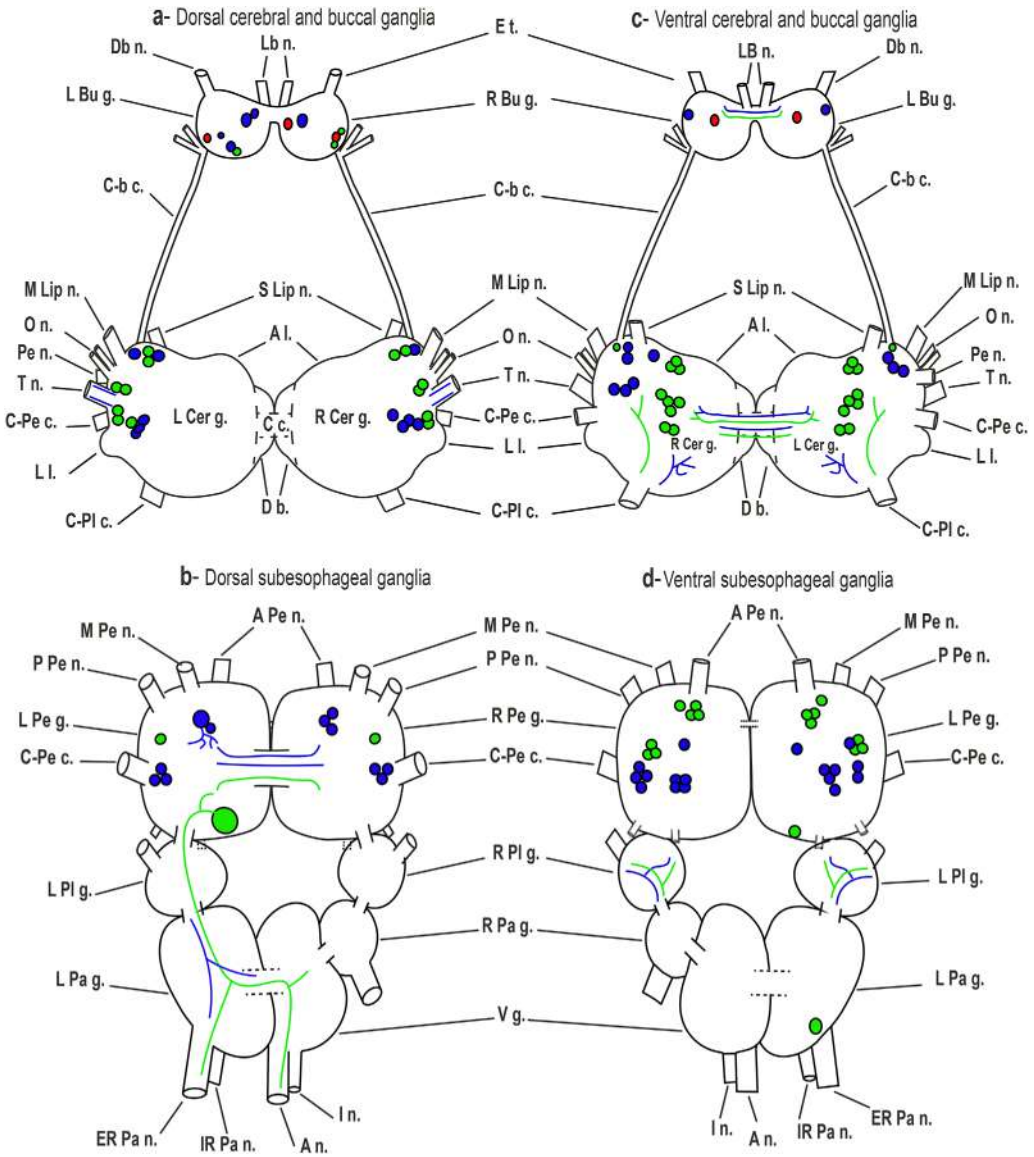

FIGURE 11 Schematic summary of GABAli and THli in *Biomphalaria*. GABAli cells and projections (blue) and THli (green) are shown for the dorsal (left panel) and ventral (right panel) central nervous system (applies to *B. glabrata* and *B. alexandrina*). Buccal cells in which GABAli and THli were colocalized are coded red. A n. = anal nerve; A Pe n. = anterior pedal nerve; C c. = cerebral commissure; C-Pe c. = cerebral-pedal connective; Db n. = dorsobuccal nerve; ER Pa n. = exterior parietal nerve; E t. = esophageal trunk; I n. = intestinal nerve; IR Pa n. = Interior parietal nerve; L Bu g. = left buccal ganglion; L Cer g. = left cerebral ganglion; L Pa g. = left parietal ganglion; L Pe g. = left pedal ganglion; L Pl g. = left pleural ganglion; M Lip n. = medial lip nerve; M Pe n. = median pedal nerve; O n. = optic nerve; Pb n. = parabuccal nerve; P n. = penial nerve; P Pe n. = posterior pedal nerve; R Bu g. = right buccal ganglion; R Cer g. = right cerebral ganglion; R Pa g. = right parietal ganglion; R Pd g. = right pedal ganglion; R Pl g. = right pleural ganglion; S Lip n. = superior lip nerve; T n. = tentacular nerve; Vg. = visceral ganglion [Color figure can be viewed at wileyonlinelibrary.com]

and function of B20 and B65 provides a contextual framework for characterizing the GABA-DA phenotype in panpulmonates.

To date, the unpaired GABAli –THli neuron in the *Aplysia* buccal system remains unidentified. Unpaired buccal cells have been characterized in gastropod buccal systems, including the 'slow oscillator' (SO) neuron of *Lymnaea* (Elliott & Benjamin, 1985) and B50 in *Aplysia* (Dembrow et al., 2003). The medial bipolar unpaired GABAli-THli cells observed here in the panpulmonates are unlikely to correspond to SO or B50 which are located in the lateral region of the ganglion and project a single process that crosses the buccal commissure. Moreover, pharmacological evidence indicates that SO and B50 are both cholinergic. It is noteworthy that the unpaired cell soma in the pulmonates examined here was located in the right hemiganglion of the sinistral species *Biomphalaria* and *Helisoma* and in the left hemiganglion of the dextral species *Lymnaea*.

4.3 | Implications for a conserved feeding central pattern generator in gastropods

The motor circuits that generate feeding in gastropods have been intensively studied in species that employ highly diverse ingestive

behaviors (e.g. Arshavsky, Gamkrelidze, Orlovsky, Panchin, & Popova, 1991; Benjamin et al., 2000; Kupfermann, 1974). Comparative studies of gastropod feeding networks can thus provide insight into circuit elements that are conserved and those that are modified to adapt to changing demands (Elliott & Susswein, 2002; Katz & Harris-Warrick, 1999; Murphy, 2001; see Paul, 1991).

Murphy (2001) advanced the 'universal tripartite model' for the feeding central pattern generator circuits of gastropod molluscs, and proposed homology between specific core interneurons in several species (see also Wentzell et al., 2009). Among the proposed homologies, the B20 and B65 neurons of *Aplysia* were hypothesized to correspond to identified neurons in the panpulmonates *Lymnaea stagnalis* and *Helisoma trivolvis* (Murphy, 2001). These homologies were based upon cell location, morphology, synaptic connections, CPG function, and dopaminergic phenotype. The present study adds GABA-like immunoreactivity to these shared features and supports the notion of a common CPG core underlying highly variable gastropod feeding behaviors.

The presence of five GABAli-THli neurons in the feeding networks of three panpulmonate species suggests that this colocalization predates the divergence of the euopisthobranch and panpulmonate groups. Molecular clock analysis estimates that this divergence occurred approximately 237 Mya near the Permian/Triassic transition. The recent localization of GABAli in the buccal ganglia of Nudipleura (Gunaratne & Katz, 2016) sets the stage for exploring whether GABA-DA colocalization predated divergence of the Tectipleura and Nudipleura groups. This avenue of investigation should provide opportunities to explore the functional consequences of classical neurotransmitter colocalization in identified neurons and tractable motor networks (Miller, 2009). This approach should also inform our understanding of cotransmission by classical neurotransmitters in more complex vertebrate nervous systems.

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