

THE POPLITEAL FOSSA

Popliteal Fossa

Is a diamond-shaped intermuscular space situated at the back of the knee

Boundaries

Laterally: (above)

The biceps femoris

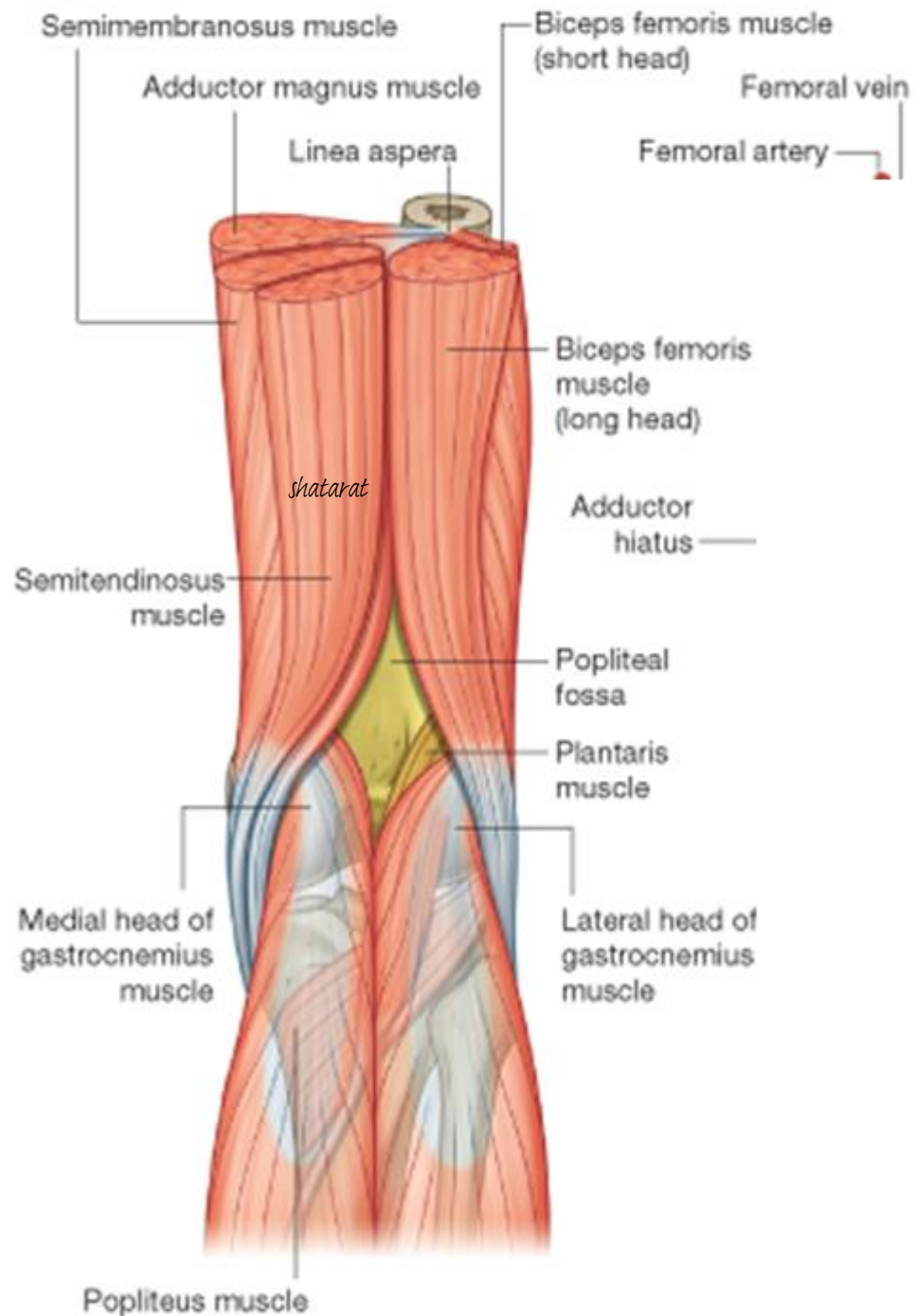
(below) *The lateral head*

of the gastrocnemius and Plantaris

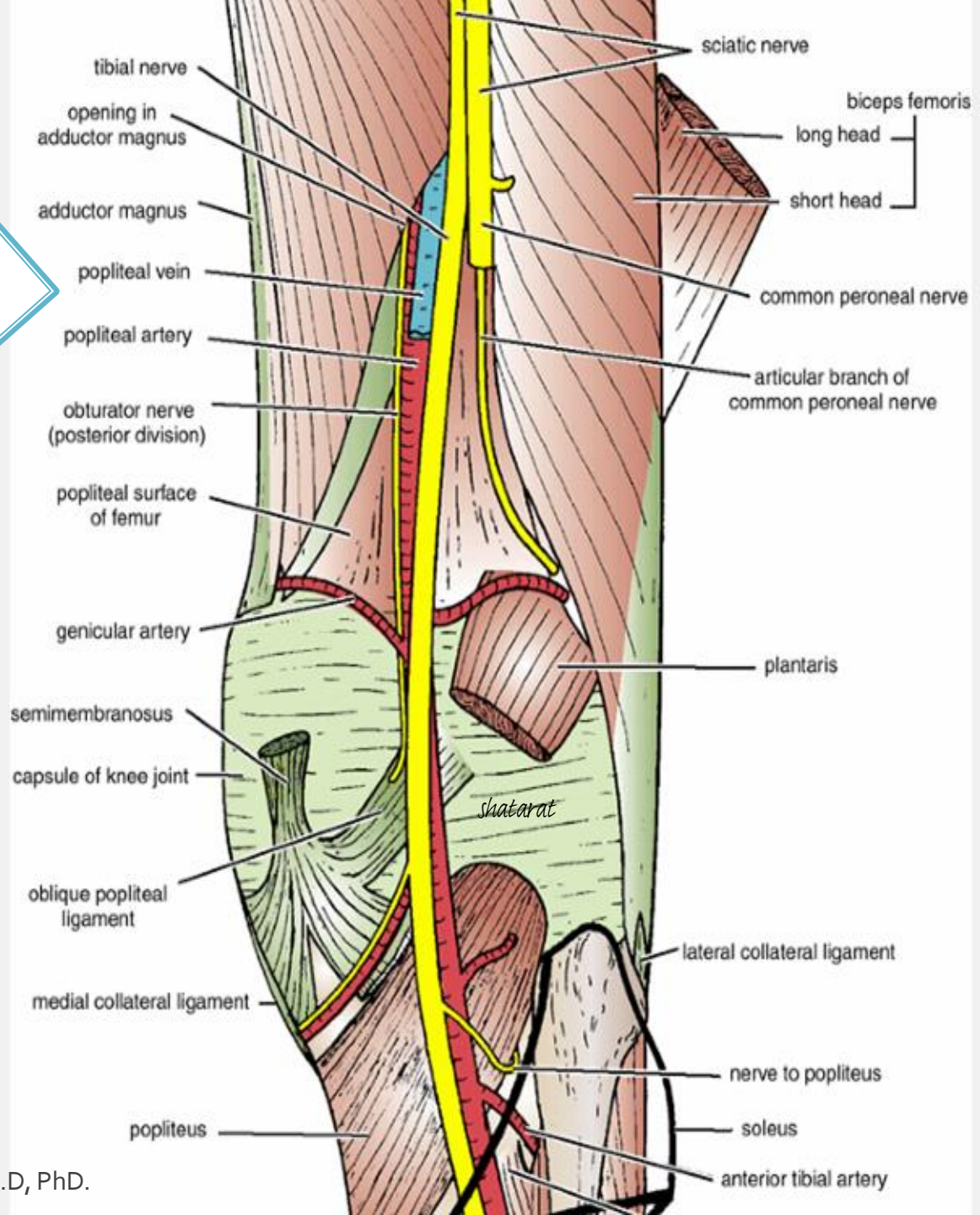
Medially:

(above) *The semimembranosus*
and semitendinosus (below)

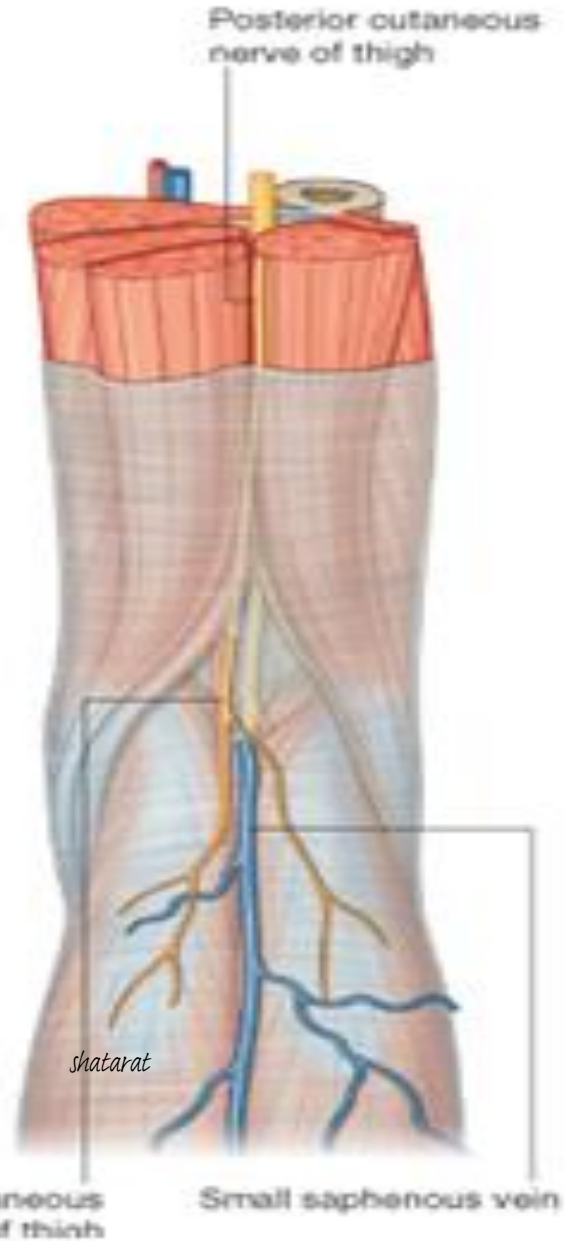
The medial head of the
gastrocnemius

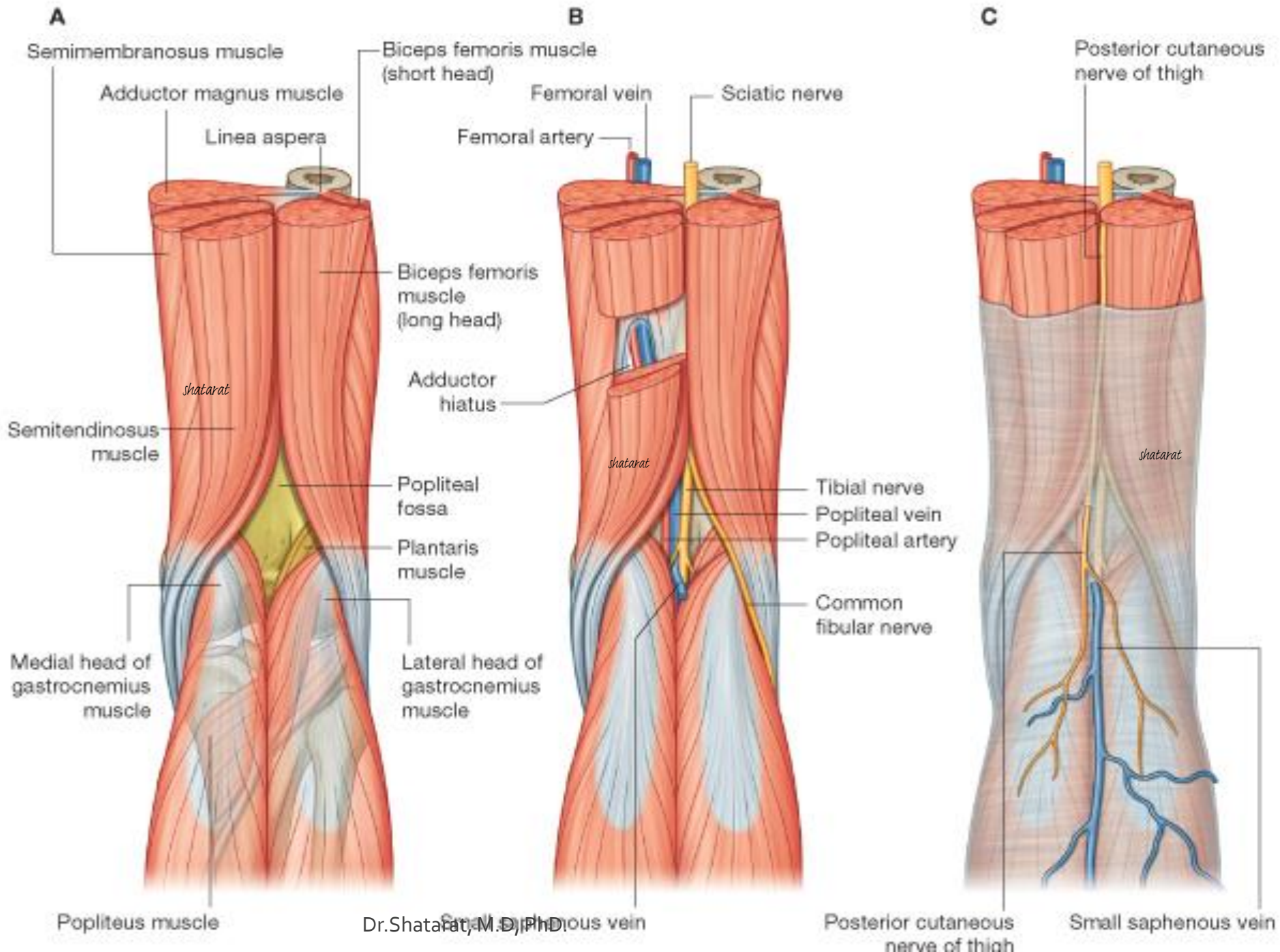


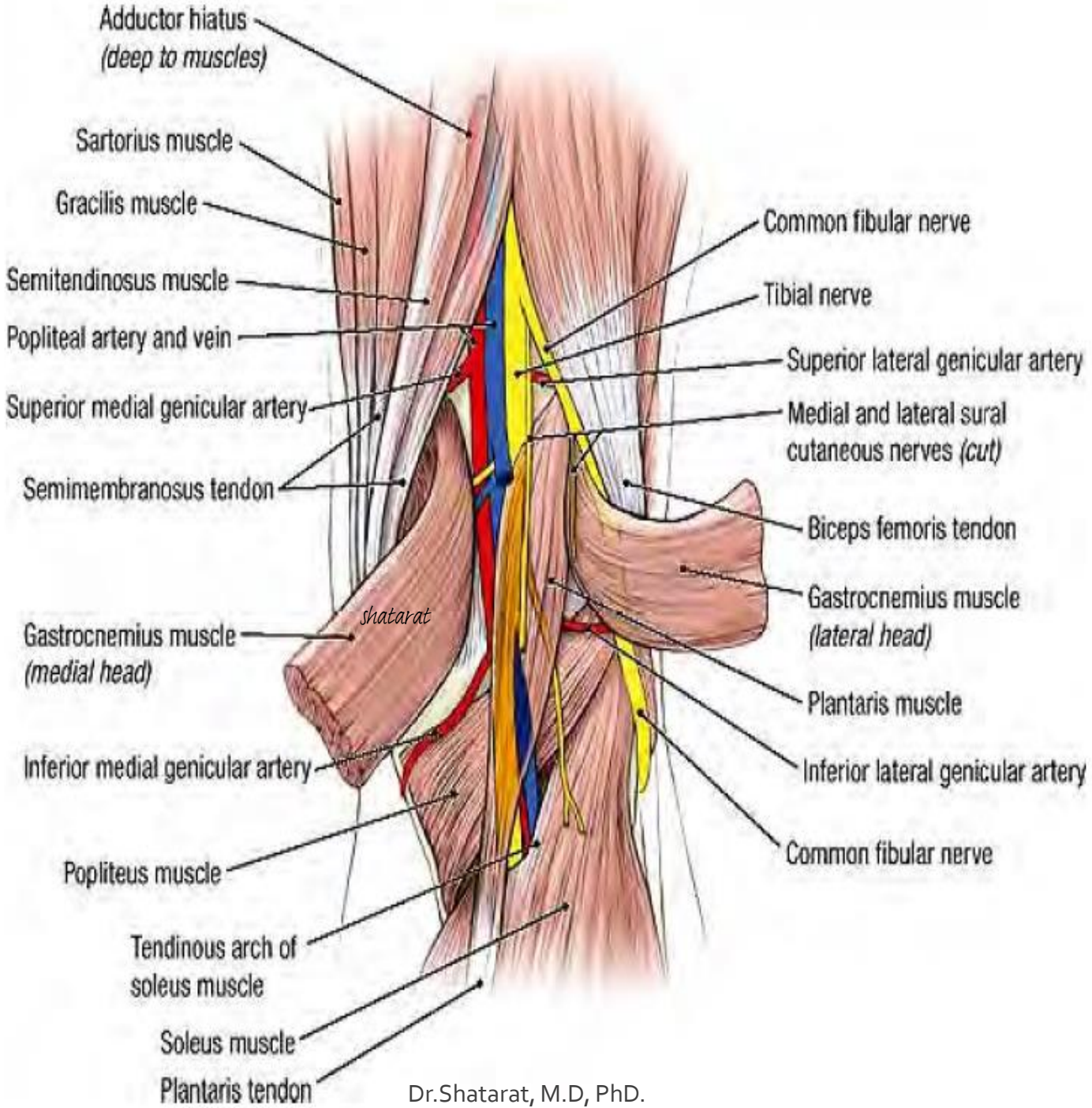
The Floor is formed by
 The popliteal surface of the femur,
 The posterior surface of the knee joint,
 The popliteus muscle.



The Roof is formed by
Skin
Superficial fascia
The deep fascia of the thigh.





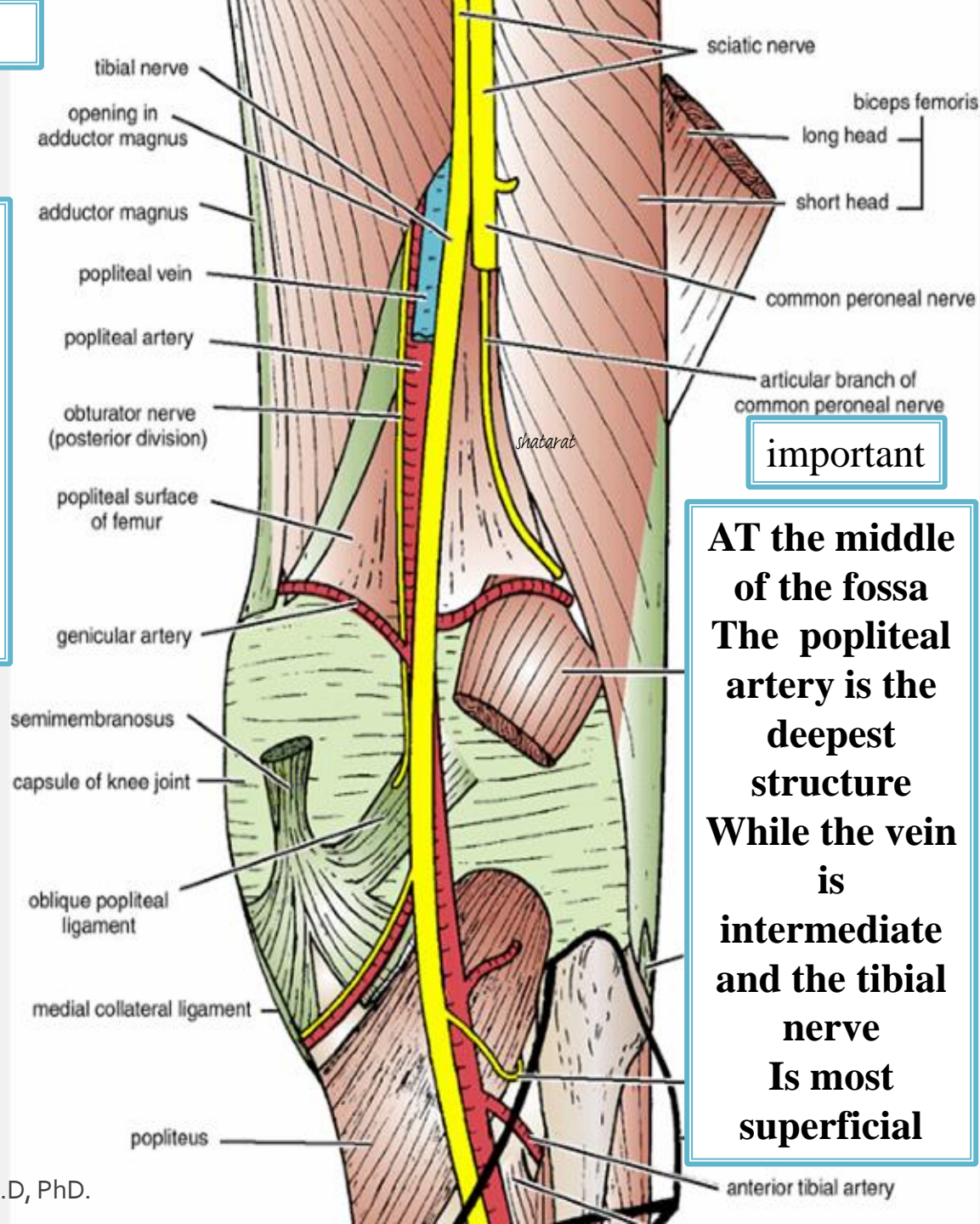


- Contents of the popliteal fossa***
- ***Popliteal artery and vein***
 - ***The common peroneal nerve (lateral popliteal nerve)***
 - ***Tibial nerve (medial popliteal nerve)***
 - ***The posterior cutaneous nerve of the thigh***
 - ***The small saphenous vein***
 - ***Connective tissue, and lymph nodes.***

The popliteal artery

➤ Enters the popliteal fossa through the opening in the adductor magnus as a continuation of the femoral artery (the deepest structure in the fossa).
➤ It ends at the level of the lower border of the popliteus muscle by dividing into anterior and posterior tibial arteries

Branches
Muscular branches
Articular (genicular) branches to the knee.



important

AT the middle of the fossa The popliteal artery is the deepest structure While the vein is intermediate and the tibial nerve Is most superficial

Tibial Nerve

- The **larger** terminal branch of the **sciatic nerve**
 - Arises in the lower third of the thigh.
 - It runs downward through the popliteal fossa
 - Enters the posterior compartment of the leg by passing beneath the soleus muscle.

Branches

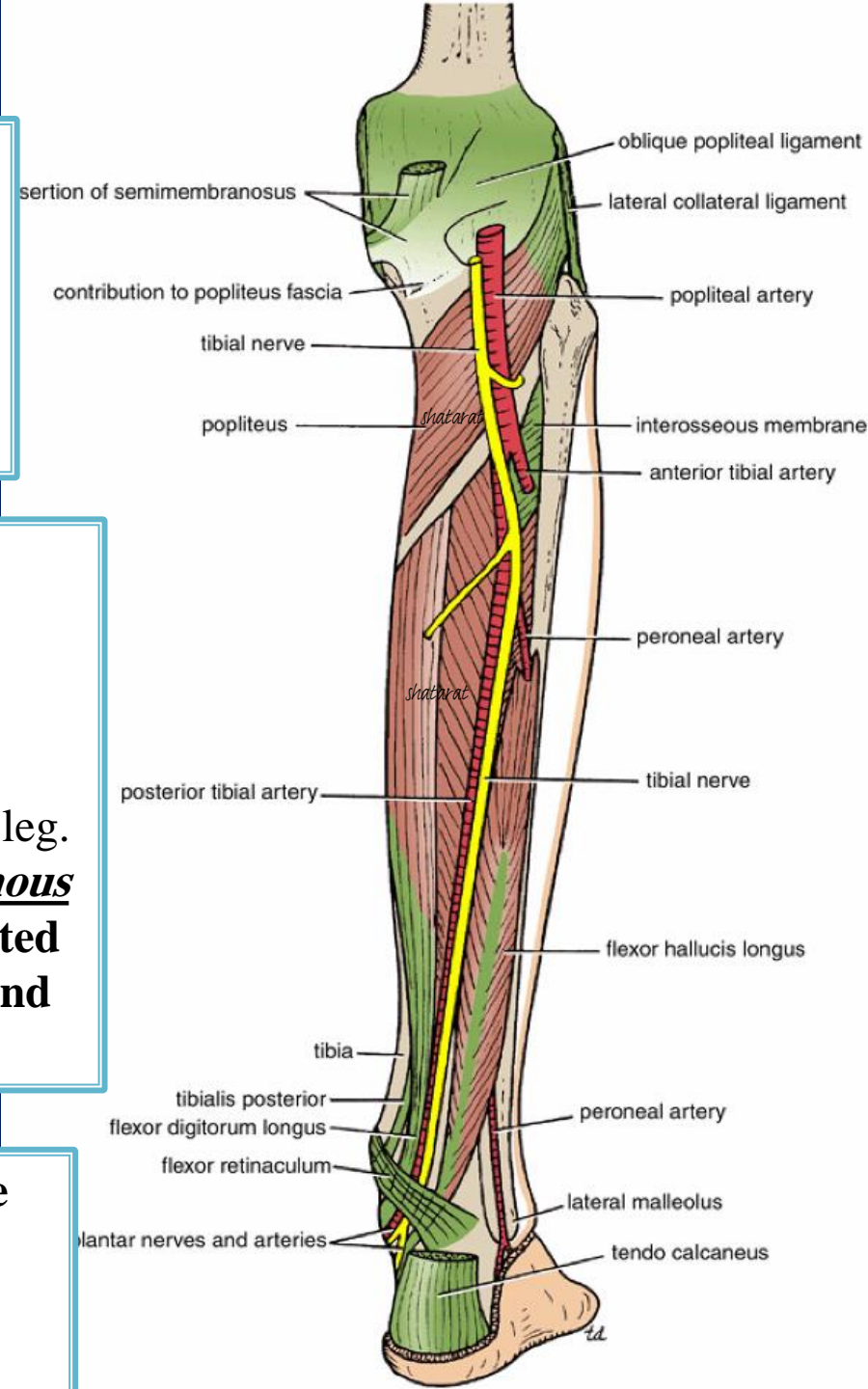
1-Cutaneous:

The sural nerve

- descends between the two heads of the **gastrocnemius muscle**
- Supplies the skin of the calf and the back of the leg.
- The sural nerve accompanies the ***small saphenous vein behind the lateral malleolus*** and is distributed to the skin along the lateral border of the foot and the lateral side of the little toe

2-Muscular: branches supply both heads of the gastrocnemius and the plantaris, soleus, and popliteus

3-Articular: branches supply the knee joint.

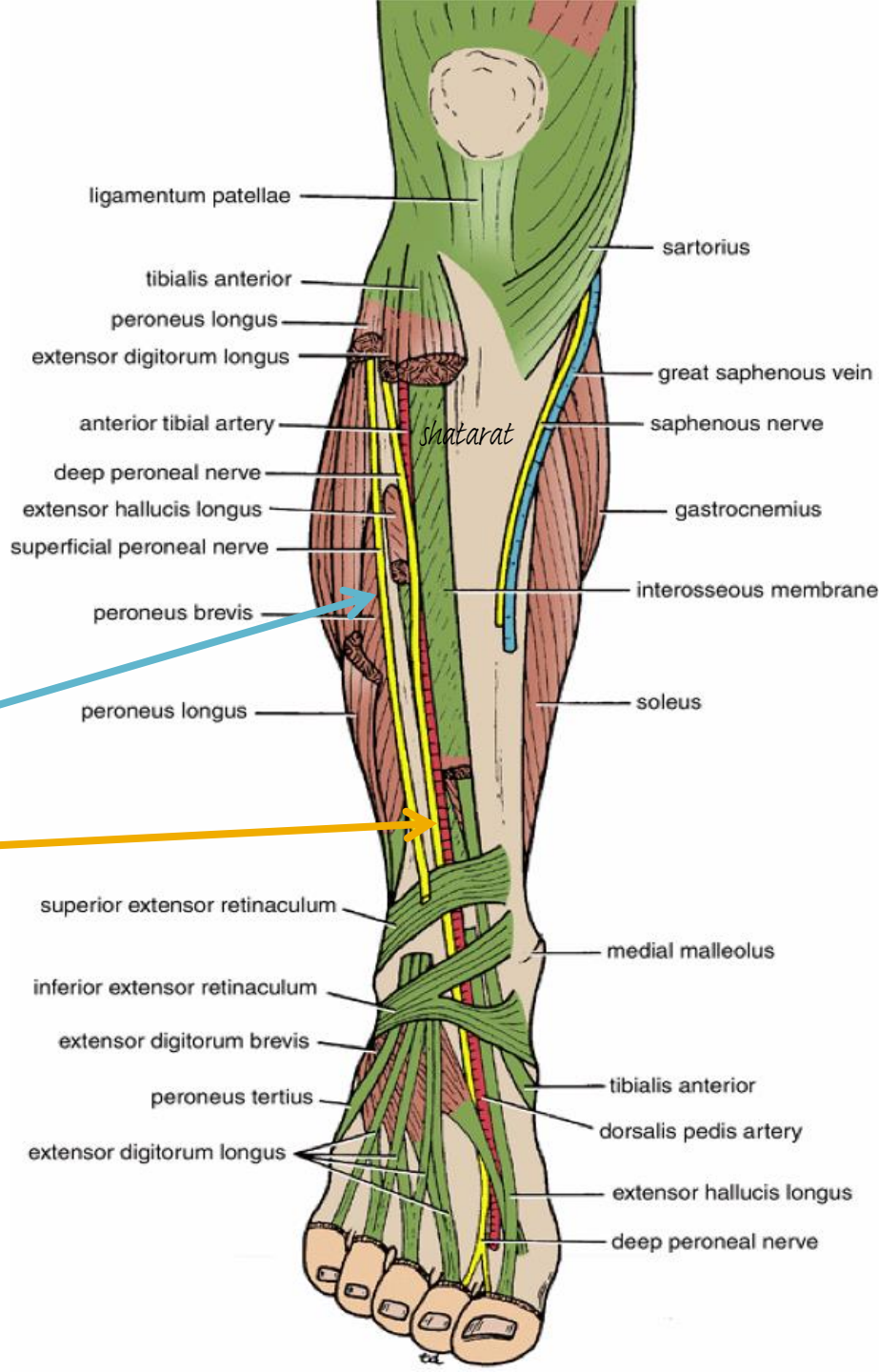


Common Peroneal Nerve

- The smaller terminal branch of the sciatic nerve
- Arises in the lower third of the thigh.
- It runs downward through the popliteal fossa
- It leaves the fossa by crossing superficially the lateral head of the gastrocnemius muscle.

- *It then passes behind the head of the fibula, winds laterally around the neck of the bone (subcutaneous and exposed to injury), pierces the peroneus longus muscle.*

- Divides into two terminal branches:
 - The superficial peroneal nerve
 - The deep peroneal nerve



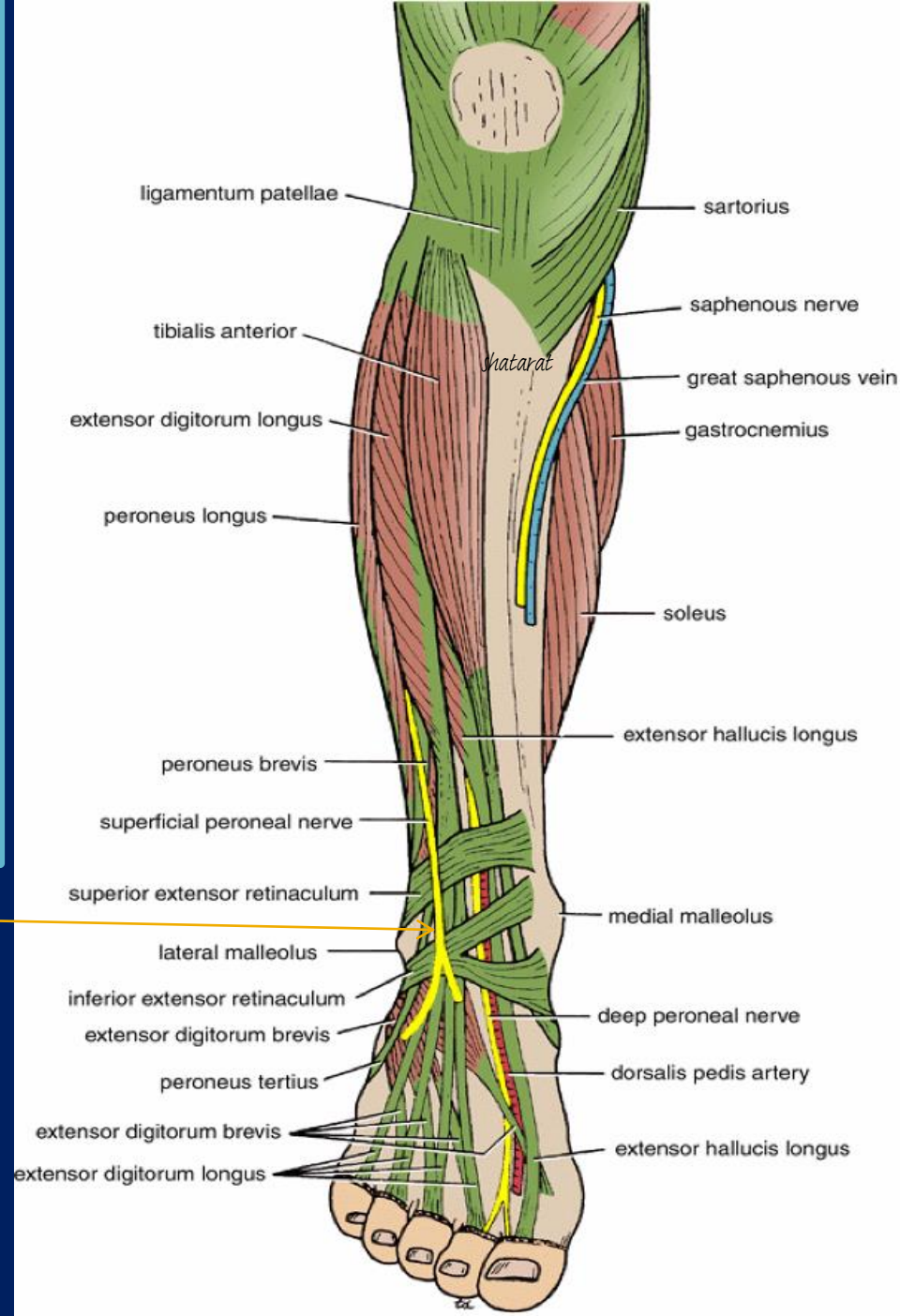
Branches

Cutaneous:

- **The sural communicating branch**
- The lateral cutaneous nerve of the calf supplies the skin on the lateral side of the back of the leg

Muscular branch: to the short head of the biceps femoris muscle, which arises high up in the popliteal fossa

Articular: branches to the knee joint



The superficial peroneal nerve

Also called the musculocutaneous nerve of the leg,

Supplies two muscles and then becomes cutaneous where

It supplies the skin over the leg