Lirath Puzzle  by Ucaoimhu

As the title suggests, each of the 51 unshaded squares here will contain a letter (one of four) that is a fantastical creature; each of the shaded squares will contain a unique letter that’s not one of those four. Also, each clue yields an eight-letter answer that is either a single eight-letter entry or a fanciful phrase consisting of two four-letter entries. The clues are ordered alphabetically by their answers; you must deduce where the entries (one of which is a two-word phrase) go in the grid.

When the grid is complete, list the shaded-square letters in alphabetical order, and for each one:

(1) Find the clue yielding the Across entry it is in, and where it is the nth letter from the start of that clue’s entire eight-letter answer, take the nth letter from the start of that clue.

(2) Repeat (1) with “Across” changed to “Down” and “start” to “end”.

The letters from (1) will explain why the unshaded-square letters are the fantastical creatures I claim they are; the letters from (2) will clarify one word in that explanation.

Huge creature sitting on Henry worried Hebe & Tom
Entertaining hack singers, in the middle, showed up to masticate venison-like meat
Note about *West Wing* actor Rob being mean — and Dorothy’s aunt, full of feelings
Prophet Amos, when unfrocked, showed a lot of staginess
As said by Spooner (a thug), “Note clarified, green-cheese-like butter”
What one’s heart does in Palermo, vehemently
“Wheel” next to hot, bolo-clad couple from Holland is a cheap ancient Greek snack cake
Husbands in Ohio, Missouri, and Mississippi making call to parents that goes on at some length
Before *HMS Pinafore*’s last triplet, Mo pivoted, generating units of 0.1 ephah volt per ampere
Finally to wear clothes vacuous neurotic mocked at some time previous
Letters appearing on a picture of an apple or pear, an Italian river, and me, thrice
Maoist ultimately obstructs return of hoopoe after five forbid giving a bear to Christopher Robin