



Alisky Studio, *Florence Stone as Cleopatra*. San Francisco, CA: [late 19th or early 20th century]. Folger ART file S877 no.1 Photo (size xs).

Florence Stone played Cleopatra in California at the turn of the twentieth century. This photograph takes its cues from nineteenth-century Orientalism and the imagery of the odalisque. Typically depicting slaves in fantasized middle eastern seraglios, orientalist paintings of odalisques feature intimate settings and sumptuous fabrics, with the subject typically reclining on a divan. Stone was known for her elaborate costuming and attention to detail. In January 1908, the *Los Angeles Herald* described her hands-on approach to costuming: "Miss Stone believes that a stage dress should be of just such material as the character would wear in real life and where she is impersonating, as she often does, a woman of luxurious tastes, her gowns are marvels of the dressmaker's art." In this case, her reference may well have been images by Renoir and other painters, rather than the "real life" of Cleopatra.