

Thursday, 6 June 2013

Egypt's Azhar aims to recover Quran manuscript



Egypt's Al-Azhar institute said on Thursday that legal measures were underway to recover a Quranic manuscript taken from Cairo in the 18th century during Napoleon's invasion. French auction house Osenat withdrew the manuscript after the Egyptian embassy in Paris lobbied against its sale. Al-Azhar, considered the most prestigious seat of Sunni Muslim learning, said legal measures were underway "to bring back the manuscript and other relics from Azhar's great human heritage." The 47-page manuscript of the opening surahs, or chapters, of the Islamic holy book was taken from Al-Azhar's mosque. Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 triggered a revolt in Cairo and the mosque was the rebels' headquarters. During an attack on the mosque, the manuscript was saved from being destroyed by fire by Jean-Joseph Marcel, an Orientalist who had accompanied Napoleon. The manuscript now belongs to a private collector.