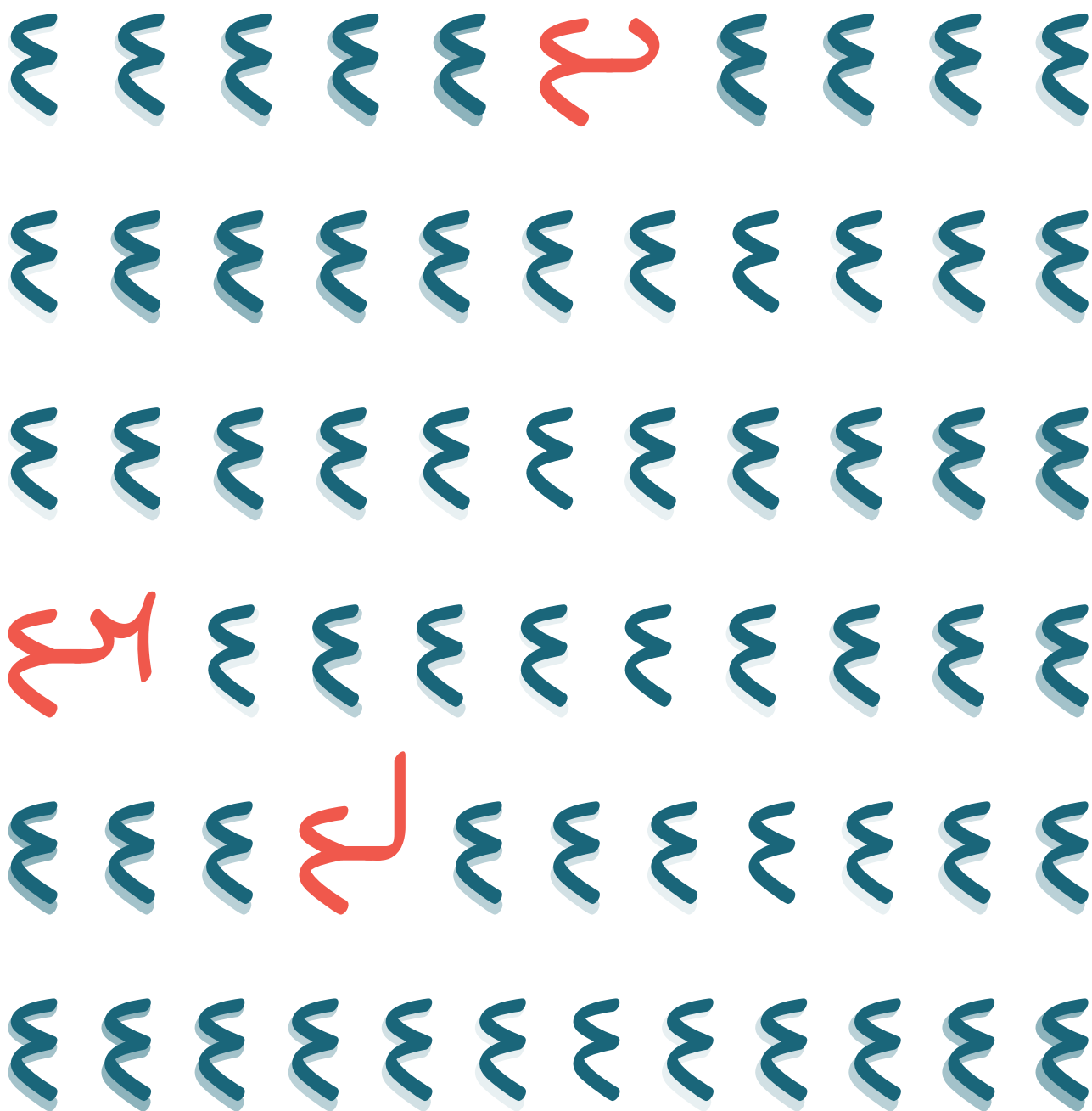


To: Unicode Technical Committee

From: Ardwan Al-Sabti, Graphic Designer specialized in Mandaic art and typography

Subject: The Non-Joining U+0858 in the Mandaic Unicode Standard

Date: 25 December 2019



The Non-Joining U+0858 in the Mandaic Unicode Standard

1 Introduction. The modern wars of the middle east, have lead the Mandaean community into diaspora. Remarkably, they still want to continue practicing their ancient Mandaic language in our modern days. However, this could not be the case without Unicode introducing the Mandaic script block in 2010.

This Mandaic block is based on the M. Everson proposal from 2008, which unfortunately includes a few essential errors that need to be fixed. For this reason an improvement must be done to the current Mandaic Unicode block by starting with the appearing errors in the Unicode standard.

2 Non Joining Characters. According to Everson's proposal there are five Right-Joining and three Non-Joining characters in the Mandaic character set, which are shown (in table 1) below:

Table 1: Right Joining and Non Joining Characters

<i>Right-joining Mandaic Characters</i>		
Character	X_n	X_r
HALQA	◦	◡
AZ		┆
IN	◡	◢
AKSA	◤	◥
ASH	◧	◨
<i>Non-joining Mandaic Characters</i>		
Character	X_n	
DUSHENNA	◩	
KAD	◪	
AIN	◫	

Source: "Proposal for encoding the Mandaic script in the BMP of the UCS"
by M. Everson, 2008, p.2

Table 2: The current Unicode list of joining properties

# Mandaic Characters	
0840;	MANDAIC HALQA; R; No_Joining_Group
0841;	MANDAIC AB; D; No_Joining_Group
0842;	MANDAIC AG; D; No_Joining_Group
0843;	MANDAIC AD; D; No_Joining_Group
0844;	MANDAIC AH; D; No_Joining_Group
0845;	MANDAIC USHENNA; D; No_Joining_Group
0846;	MANDAIC AZ; R; No_Joining_Group
0847;	MANDAIC IT; R; No_Joining_Group
0848;	MANDAIC ATT; D; No_Joining_Group
0849;	MANDAIC AKSA; R; No_Joining_Group
084A;	MANDAIC AK; D; No_Joining_Group
084B;	MANDAIC AL; D; No_Joining_Group
084C;	MANDAIC AM; D; No_Joining_Group
084D;	MANDAIC AN; D; No_Joining_Group
084E;	MANDAIC AS; D; No_Joining_Group
084F;	MANDAIC IN; D; No_Joining_Group
0850;	MANDAIC AP; D; No_Joining_Group
0851;	MANDAIC ASZ; D; No_Joining_Group
0852;	MANDAIC AQ; D; No_Joining_Group
0853;	MANDAIC AR; D; No_Joining_Group
0854;	MANDAIC ASH; R; No_Joining_Group
0855;	MANDAIC AT; D; No_Joining_Group
0856;	MANDAIC DUSHENNA; U; No_Joining_Group
0857;	MANDAIC KAD; U; No_Joining_Group
0858;	MANDAIC AIN; U; No_Joining_Group

Source: <https://www.unicode.org/Public/UCD/latest/ucd/ArabicShaping.txt> , last attempt 29 November 2019

Following the process through the suggestion of R. Pournader's "Joining types for Mandaic" (L2/10-413) and the current list of joining properties at the web (table 2), it can be concluded, that Unicode decided to have character U+0858 as a Non-Joining Mandaic character.

3 Right-Joining behaviour. In the following pages Mandaic manuscripts are presented to disapprove the choice for the Non-Joining U+0858 in the Mandaic block. The manuscripts provide clear evidence which indicate the Right-Joining behaviour of this character in the Mandaic script.



U+0858

The letter "Ain" is a borrowed letter from the Arabic script. The Mandaeans decided to include the isolated shape of the Arabic "Ain" to write thier names when those include a foreign "Ain" sound. However, Mandaeans chose to use this "isolated Arabic Ain" in two joining possibilities: as a **Non-Joining** and a **Right-Joining** character.

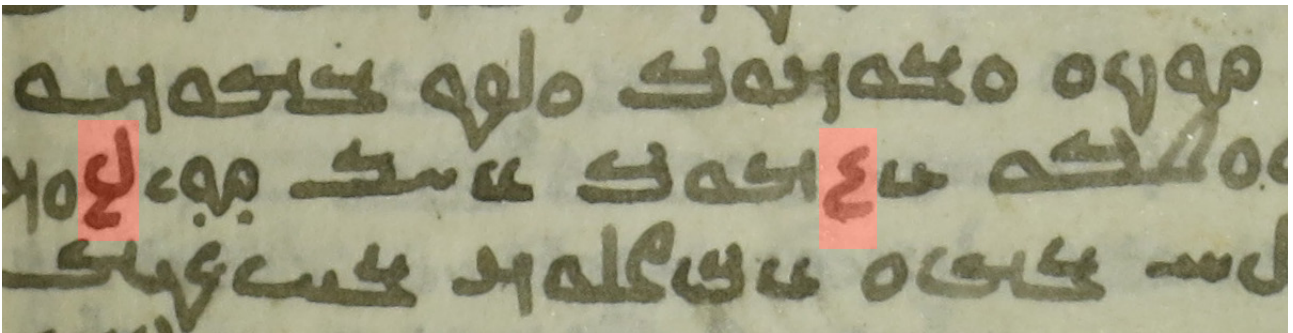


Figure 1 [RRC5D: 1890]

On the left: L (U+084B) + R-Joining Ain (U+0858) = لع

On the right: Non-Joining Ain (U+0858) = ع

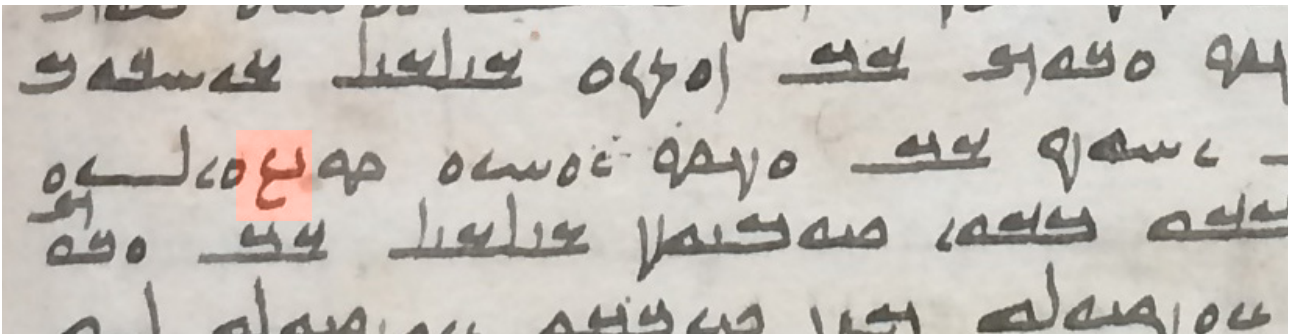


Figure 2 [RRC6I: 1897] U (U+0845) + R-Joining Ain (U+0858) = ع

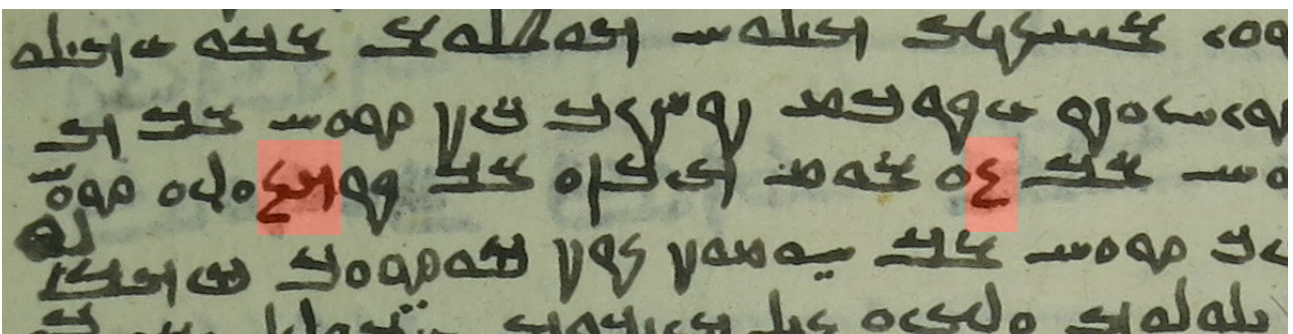


Figure 3 [RRC4J-1: 1950]

On the left: T (U+0855) + R-Joining Ain (U+0858) = تع

On the right: Non-Joining Ain (U+0858) = ع

However, Mr. Everson has introduced in his Mandaic proposal (figure 8) one unconsequent example of an private letter which shows an unconnected middle Ain:

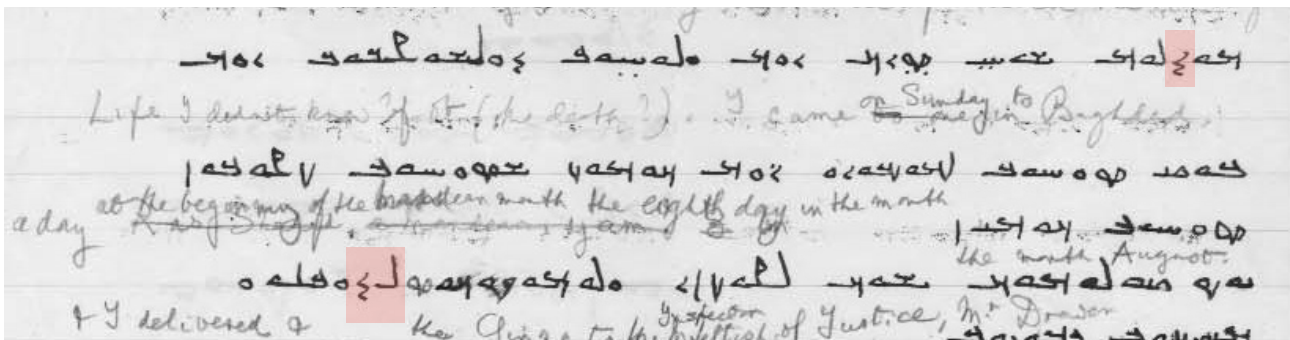


Figure 4 [Letter to Lady Drower]

On the left: L (U+084B) + R-Joining Ain (U+0858) = εⲗ

On the right: Non-Joining Ain (U+0858) = ε

4 Conclusion. The Mandaic letter Ain may join to other letters from the Right side. For this reason the Unicode Technical Committee must correct the joining properties of this discussed character by changing the setting of the joining properties from U(njoining) to **R(ight-Joining)**. Please see the correction in (table 3):

Table 3: The correction of the Unicode list of joining properties

0858; MANDAIC AIN; R ; No_Joining_Group
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In cases when a Right-Joining letter is typed in front of the U+0858, it becomes a Non-Joining Character and then **ZWNJ** should be used.

5 Acknowledgements

Fonts

The Mandaic text in this proposal was set in the font *Ardwan Manuscript*.

The Latin text in this proposal was set in the font *Times New Roman*.

6 References

Photographic evidence

All the photographic sources from the [RRC]: Rbai Rafid Collection are reproduced by kind permission of the custodian of the collection.

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|----------|-------|---|
| Figure 1 | 1890 | Manuscript RRC 5D "‘niana d-maṣbuta" by Bihram br Zihrun |
| Figure 2 | 1897 | Manuscript RRC 6I "Ginza Rba" by Iahia br Mhatam Iuhana |
| Figure 3 | 1950 | Manuscript RRC 4J-1 "Sidra d-Nišmata" by Adam Zihrun br Sam |
| Figure 4 | 1940s | Private letter to Lady Drower by Sheikh Kmat |

Bibliography

- | | | |
|---------------|------|---|
| Al-Sabti, A | 2015 | <i>Bachelor Thesis</i> : Explanation of the Mandaic script grammar. |
| Everson, M. | 2008 | Proposal for encoding the Mandaic script in the BMP of the UCS |
| Pournader, R. | 2010 | Joining types for Mandaic |
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https://www.unicode.org/Public/UCD/latest/ucd/ArabicShaping.txt |