venda', lu-names seem to be totally absent in most of the eastern and
northern areas. If we reject Johnston's data, lu-names are also absent in much of
the north-west. The net result is that we find ki-names in areas where we have
ly no trace of li- or lu-names; or so it seems. Somewhat disturbingly,
much of the ki-names exhibit stems with initial lu-like syllables, as if being
uli or lu-like prefix, for instance, Londo, Lumbu, Luguru, Luba-Kasai,
Luimbili, Luchazi and Luyana (compare with the tables in figures 91-92).52
there is any significance at all to be attached to this, the use of ki-names would
seem to be a later phenomenon than the use of lu-names, at least in these
areas. In line with this, the lu-name 'Runyarwanda' is apparently an older
form than is the currently used ki-name 'Kinyarwanda', at least according to
Tabor (1954: vii). Nevertheless, a ki-name seems like the safest
conclusion. Thus I bravely conclude this section with a proposal to dub
Bantu 'Kintu'.

From Proto-Bantu to today: what happened?

I end this chapter, I need to say a few words about what historians (and
history generally assume to have happened in between Proto-Bantu times and now,
more specifically, how and under what circumstances the present-day
formation of the Bantu languages has come about. Thus while the discussion in
this section went from the present-day state of affairs back to Proto-Bantu, I
now take the reader back from Proto-Bantu to present days.

In the historically oriented literature, one quickly discerns two main
debates regarding the history of the Bantu languages. The first one concerns
the issue of the origins of the Bantu languages; an issue that has by now been settled, the latter has not (see also Vansina 1979).

The history of subequatorial Africa will, no doubt, be rewritten several
times in the future, and so I do not intend to review or discuss the many issues
raised in the various prehistoric scenarios already established. I can only offer a
rudimentary overview of some of the opinions. I will review some of the relevant
issues here, but the discussion is not exhaustive. Figures 122 and 123
 summarizes five different views on the origins and dispersal of the Bantu
languages/people.

As for place of origin, Greenberg (1949; 1955; 1966) suggested that the origin
of the Bantu languages was to be found somewhere near the southern
Cameroonian border. This is also the standard theory today. Earlier,
however, putative lu-like names are absent in zones N and S, and with the exception of Lonwe (P23) also

Figure 122 Four different proposals for the origin and spread of the Bantu languages

Johnston (1919; 23) had suggested “perhaps between the Shari basin and the Bahr-
el-gazal [in Chad]”. His map specified the area to somewhere in what today is
western Central African Republic, or possibly north-western Congo-Kinshasa (see
Johnston 1922: xii). Guthrie (1962ab) strongly opposed Greenberg’s suggestion
and placed the original Proto-Bantu homeland “somewhere to the north-west of