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The notion of exponential Dowling structures is introduced, generalizing Stanley's original theory of exponential structures. Enumerative theory is developed to determine the Möbius function of exponential Dowling structures, including a restriction of these structures to elements whose types satisfy a semigroup condition. Stanley's study of permutations associated with exponential structures leads to a similar vein of study for exponential Dowling structures. In particular, for the extended r -divisible partition lattice we show the Möbius function is, up to a sign, the number of permutations in the symmetric group on $rn + k$ elements having descent set $\{r, 2r, \dots, nr\}$. Using Wachs' original EL -labeling of the r -divisible partition lattice, the extended r -divisible partition lattice is shown to be EL -shellable. (Received February 12, 2008)