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Supplementary Information for

 Six hundred years of South American tree rings reveal an increase in severe hydroclimatic events since mid-20th century

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47 Datasets S1 to S3 48 49
50 Here we provide additional information regarding the SADA development and its validation. 51 52 **1. Instrumental data set.** 53 The global database of climate variables is based mostly on National Meteorological Services 54 (NMS) meteorological stations with few high-altitude stations in remote areas with complex 55 topographies, such as the Andes. To tackle these deficiencies we developed a monthly climate
56 database by compiling records from hundreds of high-altitude meteorological stations from 56 database by compiling records from hundreds of high-altitude meteorological stations from 57 different institutional sources in addition to those from the NMS. Based on these data we 58 developed an instrumental database of 992 precipitation and 292 temperature records (IANIGLA 59 database), spatially distributed throughout the Andes between 12º and 56ºS latitude. The 60 meteorological records were changed to a common format and quality checked based as 61 described below. 62 Monthly temperature anomalies were accepted if they met the following criteria: 63 64 1- (T - T_{clim}) < 3 sigma
65 2- (T - T_{clim}) < T_{clim}+5^o 2- (T - T_{clim}) < $T_{\text{clim}} + 5$ °C 66 67 Where T= monthly temperature anomalies; T_{clim} = historic mean of monthly tempeture.
68 Monthly precipitation anomalies were accepted which met the criteria Monthly precipitation anomalies were accepted which met the criteria 69 70 1- (Pr - Pr_{clim}) < 3 sigma
71 2- (Pr - Pr_{clim}) < Pr_{clim} x 5 2- (Pr - Pr_{clim}) < Pr_{clim} x 5 72 $3-Pr-Pr_{clim} < 100$ mm 73 74 Where Pr= total monthly precipitation anomalies; Pr_{elim} = historic mean of the monthly 75 precipitation. precipitation. 76 77 For those cases in which these conditions were not met and extreme values were present, a
78 visual examination and comparison with neighboring stations was applied to determine wheth visual examination and comparison with neighboring stations was applied to determine whether 79 the extreme matched the regional climate pattern. If not, the monthly data point was removed
80 from the database. To create longer and more complete series, we merged the final versions of from the database. To create longer and more complete series, we merged the final versions of 81 the series with matching series from the monthly data set compiled by the Climatic Research Unit 82 Time Series (CRU TS 3.24) (1). The resulting merger and addition of the new dataset was
83 included in later versions of CRU TS (such as CRU TS 4.03). Figure S1 shows maps by de included in later versions of CRU TS (such as CRU TS 4.03). Figure S1 shows maps by decade 84 for the period 1901-2000 of the changing density of precipitation stations available for 85 interpolation onto the CRU TS 3.24 + IANIGLA database precipitation field. There is an obvious 86 set loss of local precipitation data for interpolation prior to 1950, particularly in southern Patagonia. 86 loss of local precipitation data for interpolation prior to 1950, particularly in southern Patagonia,
87 northern Chile, northeastern Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, southern Brazil and southe northern Chile, northeastern Argentina, Bolivia, Paraguay, Uruguay, southern Brazil and southern 88 Peru (Fig. S1). The gridding methodology in areas devoid of stations produces a loss of variance 89 in the CRU dataset, otherwise referred to as "relaxation to climatology" (2). 90 To develop a more complete and parsimonious instrumental dataset, an ensemble of the 91 interpolated fields of monthly total precipitation, temperatures (mean, maximum, minimum), and
92 optential evapotranspiration observations was produced from three climate databases. The 92 potential evapotranspiration observations was produced from three climate databases. The 93 employed databases were: 1) precipitation, temperature, and potential evapotranspiration data 94 from the CRU TS 3.24, University of East Anglia (1), enhanced by the incorporation of 95 precipitation and temperature records from the National Institute of Snow Glaciology are 95 precipitation and temperature records from the National Institute of Snow Glaciology and 96 Environmental Sciences (IANIGLA-CONICET) database; 2) precipitation and air temperature

 datasets from the University of Delaware (3); and 3) the precipitation dataset from the Global 98 Precipitation Climatology Centre (GPCC) (4).

99 Figure S2 shows the correlation between the CRU TS 3.24 DJF precipitation dataset and the 100 ensemble dataset of this study for three periods: A) 1901-2015. B) 1901-1950, and C) 1951-2 ensemble dataset of this study for three periods: A) 1901-2015, B) 1901-1950, and C) 1951-2015. A clear decrease in the correlation coefficients over the Andes is observed during the three 102 periods as a result of the lack of stations in these areas in the CRU_TS 3.24 data set. In
103 particular, poor correlations appear in southern Bolivia and the Andean Cordillera during particular, poor correlations appear in southern Bolivia and the Andean Cordillera during the period 1901-1950 (Fig. S2b). The climate data ensemble produced by incorporation of the IANIGLA instrumental database represents a significant improvement over the original CRU TS database because it increases the density of high-altitude meteorological stations. Nevertheless, even in the ensemble precipitation dataset there are still signficantly under-represented regions in 108 the Andes, southern Bolivia, and southern Patagonia, especially prior to 1951. A similar reduction
109 in meteorological station coverage before 1951 was noted over China during the development of in meteorological station coverage before 1951 was noted over China during the development of the Monsoon Asia Drought Atlas (MADA; 5). This led to the decision to begin the MADA calibration period in 1951 in order to use the highest quality instrumental data for developing the pointwise reconstruction models. The same choice based on a similar argument has been made here for production of the SADA.

2. Developing the instrumental scPDSI data set.

 The scPDSI (6) is calculated from time series of precipitation and temperature, together with the estimated potential evapotranspiration (PET, see references in 1). In this study instrumental monthly scPDSI was computed following Wells et al. (6) for the period 1901-2015. One-half degree gridded monthly scPDSI was the target field used for reconstruction. The monthly instrumental scPDSI data were seasonalized to produce austral summer (DJF) average values to be used for tree-ring based reconstruction at each grid point. Summer is the principal growing season of trees and was also the season targeted in the other drought atlases (NADA, MADA, OWDA, ANZDA, MXDA, ERDA).

3. SADA tree-ring network.

 286 tree ring chronologies have been developed, mostly concentrated on both sides of the Andes 127 Cordillera (16°-56°S), from the Altiplano and intermontane subtropical valleys to the Patagonian
128 forests at the southern tip of the continent (Table S1; Fig S3). New collections in tropical lowland forests at the southern tip of the continent (Table S1; Fig S3). New collections in tropical lowlands have additionally allowed extension of the geographical coverage of tree ring records to lower latitudes and elevations. Figure S3, shows the network of 286 annual tree ring chronologies. The length of the target period (1400-2000 C.E.) for reconstruction of scPDSI results from the 132 presence of a relatively high number of tree ring chronologies and good spatial coverage along
133 the Andes. Sixty-five of these tree ring chronologies completely cover the 15th century and are the Andes. Sixty-five of these tree ring chronologies completely cover the 15th century and are well distributed throughout the Altiplano, central Chile, and Northern Patagonia (Fig. S3). The number and the spatial coverage of the tree ring chronologies increase during the following centuries, providing an adequate network to reconstruct regional South American hydroclimate for the past six centuries.

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4. Standardizing SADA tree ring chronologies.

The tree ring chronologies used for reconstruction were standardized (7) to remove biological growth trends related to increasing tree size and age and to render the interannual changes in radial growth stationary over time. This process of detrending and transformation of the basic raw tree ring measurements results in a set of dimensionless growth indices with a defined mean of 144 1.0 and a standard deviation related in part to the strength of the primary climate signal contained 145 in the indices. This allows the standardized indices from many samples to be averaged into a in the indices. This allows the standardized indices from many samples to be averaged into a single tree ring chronology at a specific site for climate reconstruction. There are 286 of these site 147 chronologies in the SADA tree ring network.
148 The detrending method is a key step in prep The detrending method is a key step in preparing tree ring series for climate reconstruction, but it

can also remove low and medium frequency climate-related variance from centennial to

millennial-length tree ring series. This is related in part to the 'segment length curse' (8), because

151 it is not possible to retain low frequency variability in data that is longer than the tree ring series 152 being detrended. Additionally, the different growth curve methods used in detrending can have 153 strong effects on the retention of low-to-medium frequency variance due to climate. The signal-
154 free (SF) method (9) minimizes trend distortion artifacts, principally at the ends of the series bei free (SF) method (9) minimizes trend distortion artifacts, principally at the ends of the series being 155 detrended, and recovers common medium-to-low frequency variability throughout the length of 156 the tree ring chronology that may have been inadvertently removed by the detrending curves as
157 initially applied. This cannot be done in one step because the trend distortion artifacts and lost initially applied. This cannot be done in one step because the trend distortion artifacts and lost 158 common variance are not known at the start. Rather, the SF is an iterative procedure that is 159 applied to the raw tree ring measurements until no change in the final site chronology is detected. 160 See Melvin and Briffa (9) for details. Thus, SF is an iterative detrending method that can 161 potentially protect from the loss of common low-to-medium frequency variability caused by 162 traditional detrending methods (e.g., 7). However, different curve fits in combination with SF can
163 produce big changes in tree index series and iterative convergence may not occur. Therefore, in produce big changes in tree index series and iterative convergence may not occur. Therefore, in 164 this study we used different methods for some chronologies. In most cases we applied a negative 165 exponential curve in combination with the SF method (N=236 tree-ring chronologies), but in some 166 cases a negative exponential or age-dependent curve without SF was used (N=50 tree ring 167 chronologies) to avoid artifact variation in tree growth probably unrelated to climate. The tree ring 168 chronologies were produced with the RCSigFree and ARSTAN programs (Tree Ring Lab-LDEO, 169 Columbia University). Columbia University).

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171 **5. Point by point regression: the drought reconstruction method.**

 To reconstruct the austral summer (DJF) scPDSI grid from the 286 tree ring chronology network for the SADA domain, we used the well-tested point-by-point Regression method [PPR (10-13)]. 174 This sequential method automatically applies regressive models to the principal components (PC)
175 of the tree ring chronologies during a common calibration period between the predictors (tree of the tree ring chronologies during a common calibration period between the predictors (tree rings) and the predictands (scPDSI data) for each grid point of the scPDSI grid (14). The PPR approach uses a search radius around each grid point of the scPDSI grid to locate tree ring chronologies with plausibly stable causal relationships with the grid point in question. This process avoids the need to grid tree ring data and allows each chronology to be separately analyzed as a predictor of scPDSI in the past. There is no *a priori* specific search radius and 181 several considerations need to be made during the selection, such as the geographical
182 distribution of tree ring series, topography, and climatology. For the North American Dro distribution of tree ring series, topography, and climatology. For the North American Drought Atlas (NADA) the optimum search radius to reconstruct PDSI was 450 km. However, for the MADA and ANZDA, in which the tree ring networks were more irregularly distributed (mainly in mountain regions), an ensemble of different search radii was used. In South America the tree ring 186 chronologies developed are largely distributed along the Andes Cordillera and large low elevation
187 areas (Patagonian steppe, the Pampas and Chaco region) have no or very short tree ring areas (Patagonian steppe, the Pampas and Chaco region) have no or very short tree ring chronologies, not suitable for inclusion in the database. Larger climate patterns tend to occur over flat areas with relatively low topographic complexity (e.g. the Great Plains in North America or the Mongolian steppes) and climate variability can be captured by tree rings from these or adjacent areas. Each grid point reconstruction was produced using a minimum of 20 tree ring 192 chronologies. However, where insufficient predictors occurred within the initial search radius, the 193 range was progressively expanded by 50 km until the minimum number of chronologies were 193 range was progressively expanded by 50 km until the minimum number of chronologies were
194 located. In the Andes region a short radius is more useful to avoid the inclusion of too much no located. In the Andes region a short radius is more useful to avoid the inclusion of too much noise due to topographic complexity, whereas in flat areas without tree ring chronologies it was necessary to use larger search radii. The reconstructed scPDSI over regions without tree ring chronologies was therefore estimated using predictors mostly from the Andes. Consequently, an 198 ensemble of search radii with distances of 200, 500, 800, 1100, and 1500-km was used, similar to 199 the approach used to develop the MADA (12). Another PPR variable that can be optimized is the the approach used to develop the MADA (12). Another PPR variable that can be optimized is the screening probability. This variable defines the correlation probability threshold for retaining the 201 best subset of candidates to use for reconstruction, but may also discard useful tree ring
202 predictability information if screening probabilities are too restrictive. Here, we do not use predictability information if screening probabilities are too restrictive. Here, we do not use a hard screening threshold, but instead weight all of the tree ring series within a given search radius by the power (p) of their correlations with the grid point scPDSI over the calibration period. We use

205 an ensemble approach with unweighted ($p=0$) and weighted power correlation ($p=1$; $p=2$). Using the five search radii and three power weightings, we created a 15-member ensemble 207 reconstruction, averaging and recalibrating the output model members, and revalidating directly
208 against instrumental data. The average correlation between ensemble members at each grid against instrumental data. The average correlation between ensemble members at each grid point were then calculated. This averaging process has been shown previously to reduce noise and increase reconstruction skill (10, 12, 13). The 15-member ensemble mean, based on the bi- weight robust mean, shows a more parsimonious representation of the results and modestly improved accuracy in the model statistics in most cases compared to individual ensemble members.

 Due to the modulating effect of the Andes and the influence of distinct oceanic and atmospheric patterns such as the El Niño Southern Oscillation, the Southern Annular Mode, and the South American Summer Monsoon, South America's precipitation regime is particularly variable and different trends in precipitation exist on different sides of the Andes (15), particularly in the high elevation Andes between 24º and 38º S. To avoid predictors in the scPDSI reconstruction from west (east) of the Andes to have influences on a grid point on the east (west) of the Andes, where climate trends could be opposite, we ran two independent ensemble PPR (EPPR). The first PPR 221 omits tree ring chronologies from the Chilean region (west side of the Andes between 24°-38°S) 222 and considers all remaining tree ring chronologies as predictors. The second PPR only
223 considered predictors from the limited sites west of the Andes. Subsequently both 15-m considered predictors from the limited sites west of the Andes. Subsequently both 15-member ensemble reconstructions were merged to create a final reconstruction. This merging process may cause artificial abrupt changes at the borders. To avoid possible constrasting changes, both ensemble reconstructions share the chronologies from the Chilean region located between 20º- 24ºS and 38º-41ºS. Since the austral summer (DJF) span two calendar years, we assign to each 228 one of the 600 scPDSI reconstructed summers the calendar year of December. i.e. The summer 229 corresponding to the period 1990-1991 is assigned the year 1990. corresponding to the period 1990-1991 is assigned the year 1990.

6. Calibration and verification statistics of the reconstruction model.

 As mentioned in the instrumental data section, we observe a sharp decrease in the number of meteorological stations and limited spatial sampling in the SADA domain before 1951 (Fig. S1). The first reconstruction experiments therefore used the period 1975-2000 for calibration and 235 1950-1974 for verification. The range of variability represented within this calibration period is
236 strongly influenced by the positive phase of the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO) between the strongly influenced by the positive phase of the Pacific Decadal Oscillation (PDO) between the mid-1970s and late 1990s, which had a strong influence on rainfall variability across much of 238 South America.
239 For the second

 For the second reconstruction experiments, we calibrated our reconstruction models on the full 1951-2000 period, which is the best represented by instrumental data, and verified on the 1921- 1950 period, characterized by fewer stations and poorer spatial representation. For the calibration 242 period we calculate the well-known coefficient of determination (CRSQ or R^2) and the cross- validation reduction of error [CVRE (see Fig. 1b,c from the main text)]. Statistics for the verification period include the square of the coefficient of determination (VRSQ), the reduction of error (VRE), and the coefficient of efficiency (VCE) for the period 1921-1950 (Fig. S4). Details of verification statistics are given in Cook et al. (13, 14*)*. VRSQ is a measure of fractional common 247 variance, and has widespread use in dendroclimatology (14). Figure S4a shows the highest 248 fraction of variance (>40%) over southern Brazil, central Chile and northern Patagonia, where fraction of variance (>40%) over southern Brazil, central Chile and northern Patagonia, where high-quality instrumental data were available during the verification period. The VRE map (Fig. S4b) shows a very similar pattern, while the VCE indicates some reconstruction skill for only about 10% of the SADA domain (Fig. S4c). The VCE is the most rigorous of these verification statistics and the SA areas with poor instrumental and tree ring representations generally do not pass this test.

 In summary, these verification statistics based on split calibration/validation methods indicate that 255 the reconstruction models have relatively low predictive power. However, these results may be
256 expected considering the low number of instrumental records over the 1921-1950 verification expected considering the low number of instrumental records over the 1921-1950 verification

period. Figure S4d shows the weakest spatial correlation coefficients between instrumental and

258 reconstructed scPDSI indices during 1921-1950 (mean=0.07; median=0.06). However, a sharp
259 increase in spatial correlations was observed for the period 1960-2000 (mean=0.5; median=0.52 259 increase in spatial correlations was observed for the period 1960-2000 (mean=0.5; median=0.52). 260 Based on the experiments above, calibration/validation of the SADA used a leave-one-out 261 approach (16, 17). We selected the CVRE (see Fig. 1c from the main text) as the target approach (16, 17). We selected the CVRE (see Fig. 1c from the main text) as the target 262 verification stat for the reconstruction models, because the CVRE is based on a leave-one-out 263 procedure. This method is very useful when the observed records are short, allowing the 264 calibration and validation of the model using the full range of scPDSI data from 1951 to 2 calibration and validation of the model using the full range of scPDSI data from 1951 to 2000. The 265 approach tests the model's ability to predict new data that were excluded from the prediction, in 266 order to flag problems of overfitting or selection bias and to give insight on how the model will 267 adjust to an independent dataset. This technique works by partitioning a sample of a known 268 dataset into complementary subsets, against which the model is tested. To reduce the variability 269 and to give an estimate of the model's predictive performance, it is necessary to perform multiple 270 runs of cross-validation using different partitions, and then average the multiple validation results. runs of cross-validation using different partitions, and then average the multiple validation results.

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272 **7. Queens Case Imputation and Smoothing (QCIS)**

The grid point reconstructions generated by the EPPR method may vary in their temporal length 274 due to the different time periods covered by the chronologies available within each of the five 275 search radii. The number of empty grid points also increases back in time. Additionally, "pixeled
276 noisy" patterns and the presence of occasional "erratics" (e.g., reconstructed values inconsistent noisy" patterns and the presence of occasional "erratics" (e.g., reconstructed values inconsistent 277 with surrounding values) are apparent in the reconstructed fields, which are assumed to be due in 278 part to the strictly local reconstruction properties and random effects of the EPPR reconstruction 279 models. This implies the need to smooth the SADA reconstruction field in a coherent manner. 280 This was done by applying to each grid point reconstruction the Queen's Case Imputation and 281 Smoothing (QCIS) methods, based on the Queen's Case Adjacency model used in spatial
282 statistics (18). This method allows for local re-estimation and smoothing of the annual fields statistics (18). This method allows for local re-estimation and smoothing of the annual fields using 283 the following equation:

284

285 $Y_{i,t} = \sum \beta_i X_{i,t}$ *j* = 1,9 *i* = 1,N *t* =1,M, 286

287 Where *Y* is the smoothed field and *X* is the initial, unsmoothed reconstruction field. Where *N* is 288 the total number of grid points and *M* is the total number of years. The QCIS method uses a 9-
289 opint regression kernel to re-estimate the reconstruction at center grid point *i* for each year *t* us 289 point regression kernel to re-estimate the reconstruction at center grid point *i* for each year *t* using 290 the *j* (1-8) surrounding grid points reconstructions produced initially by EPPR, along with the 291 center grid point reconstruction itself at *i*. The addition of grid point *i* as a predictor, guarantees a
292 new centrally weighted estimate at that grid point. The number of *j* grid points is <8 at the borders 292 new centrally weighted estimate at that grid point. The number of *j* grid points is <8 at the borders 293 of the domain or in areas with empty reconstruction grid points. The regression betas (β_j) of the 9
294 reconstructions determine the relative weighting of the predictors of the center grid point reconstructions determine the relative weighting of the predictors of the center grid point 295 reconstruction. To produce each new QCIS grid point reconstruction, QCIS recalibrates the 296 reconstruction at grid point *i* using the available reconstructions at *i* and *j* as predictors and the same instrumental climate data (predictand) used by EPPR. Similar to EPPR, this procedure is 298 applied point by point over the field. We also used the same calibration and verification periods, 299 and the same principal components regression method used in producing the original EPPR field
300 reconstruction. 300 reconstruction.
301 The regression

The regression kernel locally smooths each spatial field of reconstructions, resulting in a central weighted average of up to 9 prior reconstructions. This smoothing process eliminates "erratic" values. Moreover, the imputation process in empty grid points *i* can occur when adjacent *j* grid points cover a longer time period than *i*, hence the new QCIS reconstruction at grid point *i* will be 305 extended back in time using the EPPR nesting procedure. This imputation and smoothing method 306 can be applied iteratively k fines with progressively more smoothing of the field. For the SADA can be applied iteratively *k t*imes with progressively more smoothing of the field. For the SADA field we used up to 2 QCIS iterations. Figure S5 shows the effects of imputation and smoothing over four original reconstructed years after the application of the QCIS method. The main wet/drought spatial patterns are preserved after QCIS application for the four years. However, the "pixeled noisy" patterns found in the "Original fields maps" were highly reduced by the smoothing QCIS process (QCIS fields). Additionally, the empty grid points (8%) in the northeast of the

 domain at year 1400, have been filled by the imputation process. Complete fields in the SADA begin in C.E. 1490.

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315 **8. Historical hydroclimate reconstructions.**

Historical documents from Bolivia, Chile, and Argentina have allowed the development of

- 317 continuous high-resolution reconstructions (seasonal, annual) of climatic variations during past
318 centuries (19). In order to validate our drought/pluvial reconstructions with independent records
- centuries (19). In order to validate our drought/pluvial reconstructions with independent records of
- climate variability, we selected three regions (Fig. 1 of the main text) for which hydroclimatic reconstructions have been developed from historical documents. We compared these
- independent document-based reconstructions with the three regionally averaged scPDSI time
- series (Fig. S6). All the historical hydroclimate events and the regional scPDSI averaged records
-
- 323 are compiled in Data S1.
324 Altiplano region: Gioda ar *Altiplano region:* Gioda and Prieto (20) reconstructed the interannual precipitation variability from Potosí, Bolivia, for almost 200 years (1585-1807 period). Silver extraction from the Potosí mine (4000 masl), vital to the Spanish economy at that time, was highly dependent on water runoff
- used to power the silver mills. The Spanish consistently recorded pluvials and droughts during the
- spring–summer season. These were compiled in the Actas Capitulares archives of Potosí (20).
- Data S1 shows dates of the 54 dry and very dry events and the 35 wet and very wet events used for comparison with the averaged scPDSI series for the Altiplano area framed between 17-23ºS latitude and 67-70ºW longitude (Fig. S6a and Fig. 1a main text).
- *Central Chile region:* Historical information of snowy and dry event years was used to reconstruct past hydroclimate variability in the Andes from central Chile and west Mendoza, Argentina, from
- the 16th century to 1998 (21). The list of dry and snowy events came from the following sources:
- 1) documentary reports on the state of the snow in the main pass that links Santiago and
- Mendoza, between 1760 and 1890 (22); 2) newspaper reports of snow depth along the same
- international pass from 1885 to 1998 (22, 23); 3) reports on discharge of the Mendoza river basin for the period 1600-1960 (24); 4) list of wet years as evidence of El Niño strength between 1535 and 1900 (25). The list of the historical extreme events is reported in Data S1. Figure S6b, shows the comparison and good correspondence between the historical snowy and dry events with the averaged scPDSI for the central Chile region.
- *La Plata Basin region:* Prieto (26) reconstructed the Parana River floods between 1585 and 1815 based on written Spanish records from the cities of Santa Fe and Corrientes. These records are
- mainly local, often weekly, government reports (the Actas Capitulares), which document
- socioeconomic and environmental events, especially those with significant economic impacts. Data S1 reports the dates of the 38 floods of the Paraná River between 1585 and 1815 (26) that 347 were used to compare with the scPDSI average for the area between 31-37° S latitude and 56-
348 60° W longitude. Again, good correspondence was found between flood occurrence and positive 60º W longitude. Again, good correspondence was found between flood occurrence and positive scPDSI records (Fig. S6c).
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9. Changes in extremes in South America regions

- Four regions experiencing different climate conditions were selected to explore scPDSI variability 353 and the return time of extreme events: the Altiplano, central Chile, La Plata basin and west 354 Patagonia (Fig. S7). The scPDSI reconstructions for the four regions are characterized by in Patagonia (Fig. S7). The scPDSI reconstructions for the four regions are characterized by inter- annual to multi-decadal variations. Severe persistent droughts and pluvials were identified in each region (left panels Fig. S7a-d).
- The return-time analysis for the Altiplano (Fig. S7e) showed that the frequency of extreme dry events was the highest (1-event/15yrs) in the second half of the 20th century, but was not much different than the 17th and 18th centuries (1-event/18yrs). However, no pluvials occurred during most of the 20th century. The opposite situation took place during 15th century where just one dry extreme event was recorded, while one pluvial occurred every 18 years. The return-time analysis of extreme drought events in central Chile was relatively constant over the study period, ranging between one dry event every 20-30 years (Fig. S7f). Extreme pluvial events show non-stationary frequency occurrences over the study period (Fig. S7f). Low frequencies of extreme pluvial occurrences were recorded during the first half of the 18th and second half of the 20th centuries

 (Fig. S7f), while high frequencies were recorded during first half of the 15th (1-event/12-15yrs) and the first half of the 17th and 19th centuries (1-event/17-19 yrs). The region of La Plata basin 368 is characterized by a sustained increase in the rate of occurrence of pluvial extremes, with the 369 highest rates recorded during the last decades of the 20th century (1-event/12 yrs; Fig. S7g). highest rates recorded during the last decades of the 20th century (1-event/12 yrs; Fig. S7g), while the return time of extreme drought events was high during the 16th and 17th centuries (1- 371 event/13-20 yrs) and maintained relatively low and constant activity during the 18th, 19th, and
372 20th centuries (1-event/20-30 yrs: Fig. S7g). The Patagonia region showed reduce occurrence 20th centuries (1-event/20-30 yrs; Fig. S7g). The Patagonia region showed reduce occurrence of extreme drought events during the 15th and 16th centuries, and increased since the mid-17th to the end of the 20th century (1-event/17-19 yrs; Fig. S7h). Extreme pluvials were more variable and show low return periods during the 15th, second half of the 18th, and first half of the 19th centuries, and were highest during the second half of the 20th century (1-event/12 yrs; Fig. S7h). 377
378 **10. Large-scale ocean-atmosphere climate datasets (SST, SST_N3.4, GPH500 and SAM)** We retrieved the global dataset of monthly averaged SST fields from the Hadley Centre Sea Ice and SST (HadISST) dataset that is available online from the National Center for Atmospheric Research (NCAR, 27). The HadISST data record extends back to 1870, and is spatially gridded with 1ºx1º resolution, ranging in longitude from 180°W to 180°E. We also downloaded monthly anomalies of the HadISST averaged over the tropical Pacific NINO 3.4 region, an area between 170º-120ºW longitude and 5ºN-5ºS latitude. This dataset is available online from the Royal Netherlands Meteorological Institute (KNMI, 28) The global dataset of monthly averaged geopotential height at 500 mb (GPH500) was retrieved from the National Center for Environmental Prediction (NCEP, 29). These data cover the period 1948–present and have a spatial resolution of 2.5ºx2.5º. Finally, the Southern Anular Mode index

389 (SAM; 1957-present) was downloaded from the British Antarctic Survey (BAS, 30) and the 390 methodology of the index development is discussed in detail in Marshall (31).

11. Maximum Covariance Analysis for instrumental scPDSI and climate drivers

methodology of the index development is discussed in detail in Marshall (31).

 To check the robustness of the Maximum Covariance Analysis (MCA) results derived from the reconstructed scPDSI from the SADA and ANZDA, we applied the MCA to the instrumental scPDSI and summer (DJF) Sea Surface Temperatures (SSTs) and the summer (DJF) 396 Geopotential Heights at 500 hpa (GPH500). Figure S8 maps the MCA patterns for the latter and
397 indicates that there is a strong degree of similarity between the spatial patterns of the coupled indicates that there is a strong degree of similarity between the spatial patterns of the coupled variability derived from MCA using the instrumental and reconstructed scPDSI in the analysis.

12. Comparisons to other ENSO and SAM reconstructions

401 The ENSO and SAM estimation (ENSO-e and SAM-e), derived from the MCA (Fig. 4c,d), were
402 compared with other ENSO and SAM reconstructions (Fig. S9). Tree-ring based NINO 3.4 inde compared with other ENSO and SAM reconstructions (Fig. S9). Tree-ring based NINO 3.4 index reconstructions were developed by Cook et al. (32), Li et al. (33) and Cook et al. (34), while multiproxy NINO 3.4 index reconstructions were developed by Wilson et al. (35) and Emile-Geay

(36). Figure S9, demonstrates positive correlations between ENSO-e and the five

 reconstructions, ranging from 0.20 (vs. Wilson 2010) to 0.73 (vs. Cook 2018). The 30-yr moving 407 correlation, plotted below each comparison (Fig. S9), shows changes in the stability of the 408 relationship across the entire 500 vrs. with some periods very strong ($r > 0.6$) and others w 408 relationship across the entire 500 yrs, with some periods very strong ($r > 0.6$) and others weak (r 409 < 0.1). < 0.1).

 SAM reconstructions are few in relation to those of ENSO, and they are not totally independent since they share tree ring proxies. Here we compare our estimated SAM-e with one tree ring (37)

and two multi-proxy based SAM reconstructions (38, 39). Figure S10 show the comparisons and

413 moving correlations between these records. SAM-e is well correlated with the Villalba and
414 Datwyler reconstructions (r=0.45 and r=0.52, respectively), while it is weakly correlated wit Datwyler reconstructions (r=0.45 and r=0.52, respectively), while it is weakly correlated with the

Abram et al. reconstruction. The moving correlations below each reconstruction comparisons are

relatively stable over time for the two first comparisons, and is weak and unstable for the last

reconstruction.

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Fig. S1. Spatial distribution and number of available precipitation stations by decade for 424 interpolation on the half-degree regular grid used to produce the CRU TS precipitation fie 424 interpolation on the half-degree regular grid used to produce the CRU TS precipitation field. A
425 elatively good spatial representation of stations over the SADA domain is observed since the 425 relatively good spatial representation of stations over the SADA domain is observed since the 426 1950s. 1950s.

Fig. S2. Field correlation coefficients between CRU-TS 3.24 DJF average precipitation dataset 431 and the DJF average of the ensemble precipitation dataset used in this study for the periods (A) and the DJF average of the ensemble precipitation dataset used in this study for the periods (A) 1901-2015, (B) 1901-1950 and (C) 1951-2015.

Fig. S3. Geographical distribution of tree-ring chronologies in the SA study domain during the last 437 millennium. The N located in the top of each box represents the number of tree ring chronologies millennium. The N located in the top of each box represents the number of tree ring chronologies 438 used to reconstruct the scPDSI. Note the significant reduction in tree ring chronologies before 1400 C.E.

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446 Fig. S4. Validation statistic maps of the 15-member ensemble-average SADA reconstructions for the period 1921-1950. All statistics are in units of fractional variance. Only those grid points that 448 verify at the 1-tail 90% confidence level for (A) VRSQ, and include (B) VRE and (C) VCE values >0, are plotted. (D) Time varying series of the spatial correlations between the instrumental and >0, are plotted. (D) Time varying series of the spatial correlations between the instrumental and reconstructed scPDSI index for the period 1901-2000. Note the small correlation coefficients between 1901-1950 and the increase in the spatial correlations beginning in the 1950s.

 Fig. S5. Comparisons of four annual SADA maps (1400, 1500, 1800 and 1900) showing the effects before (Original field) and after (QCIS field) the application of the QCIS method on the EPPR reconstructed fields.

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Fig. S6. Comparison between historical hydroclimate (blue and red bars) and tree ring based
464 ScPDSI reconstructions (solid black line) for (A) Altiplano, (B) Central Chile and (C) part of the 464 scPDSI reconstructions (solid black line) for (A) Altiplano, (B) Central Chile and (C) part of the La
465 Plata basin. Historical data and the tree ring reconstructions show correspondence during wet 465 Plata basin. Historical data and the tree ring reconstructions show correspondence during wet
466 and dry years. and dry years.

483 climate forcing and instrumental scPDSI fields from the same domain as SADA and ANZDA.
484 Spatial patterns of the main leading Maximum Covariance Analysis (MCA) mode between Spatial patterns of the main leading Maximum Covariance Analysis (MCA) mode between instrumental scPDSI and (A) austral summer Sea Surface Temperatures over the common period 1901-2015, and (B) austral summer Geopotential Height (500hpa) over the common period 1948- 2015.

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500 500 **Fig. S10**. Comparisons of the SAM indices derived from the drought atlases (SADA and ANZDA;
501 this study) and other authors during the period 1500-2000 C.E. The estimated SAM index from this study) and other authors during the period 1500-2000 C.E. The estimated SAM index from 502 the Maximum Covariance Analysis (1st covariance scPDSI pattern) is shown in each panel by the gray line, and the other reconstructions are colored. Correlation coefficients are indicated in the gray line, and the other reconstructions are colored. Correlation coefficients are indicated in the 504 top right of the panels. The blue line below SAM the reconstructions represents the 30-year 505 moving correlation. The dotted line represent the 95% confidence level.

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Table S1. List of tree-ring chronologies used to produce the SADA.

509
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Pilgerodendron uviferum	PIUV	1555	2000	-5345	-7100	Mount Tarn
Pilgerodendron uviferum	PIUV	1723	2000	-5454	-7000	Obriens Is.
Pilgerodendron uviferum	PIUV	1637	1994	-4915	-7405	Pio XI
Pilgerodendron uviferum	PIUV	1554	1987	-4230	-7350	Piuchue Is Chiloe
Pilgerodendron uviferum	PIUV	1543	2000	-4906	-7424	Puerto Eden
Pilgerodendron uviferum	PIUV	1460	1994	-40.44	-72.18	Puyehue* MERGE
Pilgerodendron uviferum	PIUV	1765	1982	-4140	-7125	Rio Foyel
Pilgerodendron uviferum	PIUV	1458	2000	-4811	-7309	Rio Pascua
Pilgerodendron uviferum	PIUV	1517	2000	-5349	-7107	San Nicolas
Pilgerodendron uviferum	PIUV	1400	2000	-3936	-7206	San Pablo
Pilgerodendron uviferum	PIUV	1677	2000	-5345	-72.29	Santa Ines
Pilgerodendron uviferum	PIUV	1489	1986	-4300	-72.30	Santa Lucia Chiloe
Pilgerodendron uviferum	PIUV	1530	2000	-5340	-7233	Seno Ballena
Pilgerodendron uviferum	PIUV	1400	2000	-4842	-7404	Tempano
Pilgerodendron uviferum	PIUV	1600	1993	-4611	-73.34	Trails Top
Polylepis tarapacana	POTA	1400	2000	-1858	-6901	Cerro Capitan
Polylepis tarapacana	POTA	1573	2000	-2213	-6636	Cerro Ramada
Polylepis tarapacana	POTA	1431	2000	-2200	-6717	Cerro Soniquera
Polylepis tarapacana	POTA	1400	2000	-2220	-6714	Cerro Uturunco
Polylepis tarapacana	POTA	1400	2000	-1907	-6827	Frente Sabaya
Polylepis tarapacana	POTA	1400	2000	-2043	-6834	Irruputuncu
Polylepis tarapacana	POTA	1795	2000	-1713	-6913	Ja Condori+Cnic+serke+huari
Polylepis tarapacana	POTA	1761	2000	-1756	-6927	Nasahuento
Polylepis tarapacana	POTA	1444	2000	-1922	-6855	Queniza
Polylepis tarapacana	POTA	1484	2000	-1856	-6900	Surire High
Polylepis tarapacana	POTA	1400	2000	-1854	-6900	Surire Low
Polylepis tarapacana	POTA	1400	2000	-1855	-6900	Surire Medio
Polylepis tarapacana	POTA	1414	2000	-1911	-6854	Taipicollo
Polylepis tarapacana	POTA	1400	2000	-2130	-6752	Volcan Caquellas
Polylepis tarapacana	POTA	1620	2000	-2235	-6633	Volcan Granada + Cerro Negro
Polylepis tarapacana	POTA	1400	2000	-1828	-6910	Volcan Guallatire
Polylepis tarapacana	POTA	1650	2000	-1835	-6910	Volcan Guallatire D
Prosopis ferox	PRFE	1853	2000	-2308	-6521	Quebrada Sapagua Humahuaca

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 Dataset S1. This record reports the scPDSI averages of the grid points from three regions (the Altiplano, central Chile and La Plata basin), and the occurrences of severe/extreme hidroclimate events reconstructed by historical information corresponding to the same regions.

 Dataset S2. Estimators of ENSO (ENSO-e) and SAM (SAM-e) variability for the past 500 years obtained by MCA for reconstructed scPDSI fields from the SADA and ANZDA and the Sea Surface Temperature and Geopotential Height climate modes.

 Dataset S3. The resulting time series of the difference between both climate index estimators (ENSO_e – SAM_e) and the anomalous negative/positive values by the 5th and 95th percentiles, respectively. 25 (26) negative (positive) values were associated with coupled anomalous negative (positive) ENSO-e and positive (negative) SAM-e events.

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